A Romans

RECORD

OF

Ancient Hiſtories,

Entituled in Latine:

Geſta Romanorum.

Diſcourſing of ſundry Examples, for the advancement of Vertue, and the abandoning of Vice.

Very pleaſant in Reading, and profitable in Practiſe.

LONDON

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THE HISTORY OF *Geſta Romanorum.*

The Argument.

Mans ſoul is dearly beloved of God the Father. And yet for ſundry good graces ſhe is tempted of the Devil by three divers means, at three ſeveral Ages in this mortal life: if ſhe reſiſt and overcome the ſame, ſhe is hereby adopted to the fruition of matrimonial joy in heaven, with Chriſt the Son of God.

The firſt Hiſtory.

SOmetimes there dwelt in Rome a mighty Emperor which had a fair creature to his Daughter, named Atalana, whom divers great Lords, and many Noble Knights deſired to have to wife, This Atalana was wonderous ſwift of foot: wherefore ſuch a law was made, that no man ſhould have her to wife except he could outrun her and take her by ſwiftneſs of foot. It befel that many came to run with her,

but could not ouertake her. At the last there came a Knight named Pomeis, unto her Father, and said to him: My Lord, if it please you to give me your Daughter to wife, I will run with her. Then said her Father, there is a Law made, that whosoever will have her to wife, must first run with her: & if he ouertake her not, he shall lose his head, and if he ouertake her then shall I wed her unto him.

And when the Emperor had told him all the peril that might fall in the winning of her the Knight voluntarily granted for to bide that jeopardy. Then the Knight provided him three Balls of gold against the running. And when they had began to run a little space the young Lady ouer-ran him: then the Knight threw forth before her the first ball of gold, and when the damesel saw the ball, she stooped and took it up, and in the mean while the Knight gat before her, but that prevailed little, for when she perceived it, she ran so fast, that in short space she gat before him again. And then he threw forth the second ball of gold, and she stooped as she did before and took it up, and in that while the Knight gat before her again: which this young damesel seeing, constrained her self, and ran so fast, that she soon had him at advantage again, and was afore him: now by that time they were nigh the Mark whereby they should abide, wherefore the Knight

threw

threw forth the third ball before her, and she stoped down to take up the ball, and while she was taking up the third ball, the Knight gat before her, and was first at the mark, and thus was she won.

The Moral.

By this Emperor is understood the Father of Heaven, and by Damosel is understood the soul of man, with whom many Devils desire to run and deceive her through their temptations, but she withstandeth them mightily, and overcometh them. And when he hath done his worst and may not speed, then makes he three balls of gold, and casteth them before in three ages of man, that is, to say, in youth, in manhood, and in old age. In youth the Devil casteth the ball of letchery before her, that is to say the desire of the flesh: nevertheless, for all this ball, oftentimes man overcometh the Devil, by acknowledging of his sins to God by hearty repentance and amendment of life. The second ball is the ball of Pride, the which the Devil casteth to man in his manhood, that is to say in his middle age: but this ball man oftentimes overcometh as he did the first, but let him beware of the third ball, which is covetousness, that the Devil casteth to man in his old age, which is dreadful: for except a man may overcome this ball, with the other two, he shall

lose

loſe his honor, that is to ſay, the Kingdom of Heaven. For when a man burneth in covetouſneſs, he thinketh not on ghoſtly Riches (for ever his heart is ſet on worldly goods) and reckoneth not of Prayers, nor of well doing, and thus loſeth he his heritage, to the which God hath bought him with his precious blood: unto the which our Lord Jeſus bring us all.

The Argument.

As God allotteth divers men divers callings and eſtates of living in this World, ſo is every man tried by the rule of life and doctrine, whether his practice agree with his profeſſion, in profiting himſelf without prejudice to others, wherein if he ſo hold himſelf content, for ſuch a Son the heavenly father hath planted a Tree of heavenly treaſure, in the life that ſhall be everlaſting.

The ſecond Hiſtory.

There reigned ſometime in Rome a wiſe and mighty Emperor, named Anſelm, who did bear in his armes a Shield of ſilver with five red Roſes, This Emperor had three ſons, whom he loved much: He had alſo continual war with the King of Egypt, in which war he loſt all his temporal goods, except a precious Tree. It fortuned after on a day, that he gave battel to the ſame King of Egypt wherein he was grievouſly wounded, nevertheleſs he obtained the victory, notwithſtanding

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ing he had his deadly wound: wherefore while he lay at point of death, he called unto his eldest son, & said, My dear & well-beloved son, all my temporal riches are spent, and almost nothing is left me, but a precious Tree, the which standeth in the midst of my Empire: I give to thee all that is under the earth, and above the earth of the same tree, & my Reverend father (quoth he) I thank you much.

Then said the Emperor call to me my second son. Anon the eldest son greatly joying of his Fathers gift, called in his brother, and when he came, the Emperor said: My dear son I may not make my testament, for as much as I have spent all my goods, except a Tree which standeth in the midst of mine Empire of the which Tree, I bequeath to thee all that is great and small. Then answered he & said My Reverend Father, I thank you much.

Then said the Emperor call to me my third son, and so it was done. And when he was come, the Emperor said, My dear son, I must die of these wounds, & I have only a precious tree of which I have given thy brethren their portion, and to thee I bequeath thy portion: for I will that thou have of the said Tree all that is wet and dry. Then said his Son: Father I thank you. Soon after the Emperor had made this bequest, he dyed. And shortly after the eldest Son took possession of the tree.

Now

Now when the second Son heard this, he came to him, saying: My brother, by what law or Title occupy you this tree? Dear brother, quoth he, I occupy it by this Title, my Father gave me all that is under the earth, and above of the said Tree, by reason thereof the Tree is mine? Unknowing to thee quoth the second brother, he gave unto me all that is great and small of the said Tree, and therefore I have as great right in the Tree as you. This hearing the third Son he came to them and said. My well beloved brethren, it behoveth you not to strive for this Tree for I have as much right in the tree as ye: for by the law ye wot that the last Will & Testament ought to stand, for of truth he gave me of the said tree all that is wet and dry, and therefore the Tree by right is mine? but for as much as your words are of great force, and mine also, my counsel is, that we be judged by reason: for it is not good nor commendable that strife or dissention should be among us. Here beside dwelleth a King full of reason, therefore to avoid strife let us go to him, and each of us say his right before him, & as he shall judge let us stand to his judgment: then said his Brethren, thy counsel is good, wherefore they went all three unto the King of Reason, and each of them severally shewed forth his right unto him, as it is said before.

Then

When the King had heard the Titles, he rehearsed them all again severally, first saying to the eldest Son, thus: You say (quoth the King) that your Father gave you all that is under the Earth and above the earth, of the said Tree. And to the second Brother he bequeathed all that is great and small of that Tree. And to the third Brother he gave all that is wet and dry.

And with that he laid the Law to them, and said, that this Will ought to stand.

Now my dear friends, briefly I shall satisfie all your requests: and when he had thus said, he turned him unto the Eldest brother, saying, My dear friend, if you list to abide the judgment of Right it behoveth you to be letten Blood of the Right Arm. My Lord (quoth he) your will shall be done. Then the King called for a discreet Physition, commanding him to let him blood.

When the eldest son was thus letten blood the King said unto them all three: My dear friends where is your Father buried? then answered they and said, forsooth my Lord, in such a place. Anon the King commanded to dig in the ground for the body, and to take a stone out of his breast, and to bury the body again: and so it was done. And when the stone was taken out, the King commanded that it should be laid in the blood of the Elder

Brother,

brother, and it should lie till it had received kindly the blood, and then to be laid in the sun and dried, & after that it should be washed with clear water: his Servants fulfilled all that he had commanded: and when they began to wash, the blood banished clean away. When the King saw this he said to the second son, it behoveth that thou be letten blood as thy brother was. Then said he: My Lord's will shall be fulfilled, and anon he was done unto like as his Brother was in all things: and when they began to wash the bone, the blood banished away. Then said the King to the third Son, it behoveth thee to be letten blood likewise. He answered and said, My Lord, it pleaseth me well so to be. When the youngest brother was letten blood, and done unto in all things as his two brethren were before, then the Kings Servants began to wash the bone, but neither fer washing nor rubbing might they do away the blood of the bone, but it ever appeared bloody, when the King saw this, he said, it appeareth openly now that this blood is of the nature of the bone, thou art his true son and the other two are bastards, I judge thee the true for evermore.

The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperor betokeneth our Lord Jesus Christ, which bare a Shield

of silver with five red Roses, that is, his body that was so fair, so clear and more radient then any silver, according to the Psalmist: Speciosus forma præ fillis hominum, that is, he was more fair then all the children of men. By the five red roses we understand his five wounds, which he suffered for mankind. And by the King of Egypt we understand the Devil, against whom he fought all the time of his life, and at the last he was slain for mankind. Nevertheless before his death, he made his Testament to his three sons.

By the first, to whom he gave of the tree, all that was under the earth and above the earth we understand such mighty men, and others of all estates in this World, as are not content with their callings, seek ambitiously the subversion of others, to magnifie and exalt themselves. By the second Son, to whom he gave all of the tree that was great and small, we understand such worldly wise men in this world, which in their subtilty attempt to win or lose all. By the third son, to whom he gave all that was wet and dry of the tree, we understand every good Christian Prince, Nobleman, Majestrate, or Meanor Person in every Common-wealth wheresoever, which (eschewing all ambition and covetousness) holding himself content with the providence of God, and in his own calling, laboureth truly

truly to do good unto all men; yea, though himſelf ſuſtain injuries, ſuffering now ſolace then care, now riches, then poberty: yet receibeth all this thankfully, to habe this precious Tree thus bequeathed unto them. This Tree is the Tree of Paradice, that is everlaſting joy which is giben to us all if we take it thankfully. This every man obtaineth not, therefore it behobeth them to go to the King of Reaſon, that is, unto the Father of Heaben who knoweth all things. The firſt Son was let blood, and in his blood the bone was laid. By this bone we ſhall underſtand our ſtrong faith in Chriſts merits, & by the blood, the libely and fruitful ſap of good workes, proceeding out of the ſame, which are rare things to be found in thoſe that ſeek their oben private gain, who when they are let blood by the ſharp Lance of Gods Juſtice, and it be eſtabliſhed by Dibine Predication, and made dry with the Sun of outward profeſſion, yet being waſht with the water of ſwelling Pride, Malice, Enby, and ſuch like, then the faith in Chriſts Merits, is as though we had not received it, and the libely fruitful ſap of good workes hath no power to tarry upon it, but baniſheth away. And thus it fared with the other two, the firſt and ſecond ſons: but the third Son being contrary unto the other in profeſſion and practiſe of life and manners be

the magistrate or mean person, the bone of such a person will ever be firm of faith, in himself and towards others. From such a mans bone the blood of lively fruits (to himself and all others profitable) will never be washed away with the water of wretchedness. But the more it is dried in the Sun of true trial, the better it is. Such are the true Children of God, of whom our Lord speaketh thus, ye which have forsaken all things for me, that is, ye that have forsaken the way of sin, shall receive an hundred times more, that is, ye shall not onely receive the tree of Paradise, but also the heritage of Heaven. These other two are Bastards, because what they promised in their Baptism, they wrought all the contrary, through their wicked living, and therefore he that desireth to obtain the joys of Heaven, must abide stedfastly in the profession and practice of good life and manners, and then by Christ he shall obtain the tree of Paradise, unto which he bring us, who live and reigneth for ever, Amen.

The Argument.

God so loved sinful man, that he sent his only begotten Son to redeem him out of the Captivity of the world, to rest with him in the joys of Heaven,

The third History.

IN Rome there dwelt some times a Noble Emperor named Diocletian, who loved exceeding y

ceedingly the vertue of charity, wherefore he deſired greatly to know what Fowl loved her young beſt, to the intent that he might thereby grow to more perfect charity, it fortuned upon a day, that the Emperor rode to a Forreſt to take his diſport, whereas he found the neſt of a great bird (called in latin *Struchio Cameli*, in Engliſh an Oſtridge) with her young, the which young Bird the Emperor took with him, and cloſed her in a Veſſel of glaſs, the Dam of this little Bird followed unto the Emperors Palace, and flew into into the Hall where her young one was. But when ſhe ſaw her young one, and could not come to her, nor get her out, ſhe returned again to the Forreſt, & abode there three days, and at the laſt ſhe came again to the Palace, bearing in her mouth a worm called Thumare and when ſhe came where her young one was, ſhe let the worm fall upon the glaſs, by vertue of which worm the glaſs brake, & the young one flew forth with her Dam. When the Emperor ſaw this, he praiſed much the Dam of the bird, which laboured ſo diligently to deliver her young one.

The Moral.

Dear friends, this Emperor is the Father of Heaven, which greatly loveth them that live in perfect love and charity: This little bird taken from the forreſt, and cloſed in the

glaſs

Glass, was Adam our Forefather, which was exiled out of Paradise and put into the Glass that is, Hell. This hearing the Dam of the Bird, that is the Son of God, he descended from Heaven, unto the Forrest of the World, and lived there three dayes bearing with him a Worm, that is, Manhood, according to the Psalmist, I am a Worm and no man. This was slain among the Jews, of whose blood the vessel external was broken, and the Bird went out, that is, Adam went forth with his Dam the Son of God, and flew to Heaven.

The Argument.

A clean spirit and undefiled soul is the Daughter of God, so dear unto him that he bestows her not upon the rich man wanting wisdom. but upon the poor man that is wise & liveth in his fear, which if she have at any time time transgrest by frailty of flesh, then seeketh she for recovery of her health by the medicine of amendment of life: such a soul shal be espoused to Christ, and live with him in the World to come everlastingly.

The fourth History.

SOmtime reigned in Rome a worthy Emperor & a wise, which had a fair Daughter and a gracious in the sight of every man. This Emperor bethought him on a day, to whom he might give his Daughter in marriage, reasoning thus: If I give my Daughter to a rich man, and he be a fool, then is she lost, but if I give her to a poor and a wise

man, then may he get his liuing by his wiſdom.

There was at that time dwelling in the City of Rome, a Philoſopher named Socrates poor but wiſe, which came to the Emperor and ſaid, My Lord, be not diſpleaſed though I put forth my petition before your Highnes the Emperor ſaid, ſpeak on: then ſaid Socrates, My Lord, ye habe a Daughter whom I deſire abobe all things. The Emperor anſwered and ſaid: My friend: I ſhal gibe thee my Daughter to wife on this condition, that if ſhe dye in followſhip after that ſhe is eſpouſed to thee, thou ſhalt without doubt loſe thy head Then ſaid Socrates, upon this condition I will gladly take her to my wife. The Emperor hearing this, called all ẏ Lords and States of his Empire, and made a great feaſt at their wedding. And after the feaſt Socrates led home his wife to his own Houſe, where they liued in peace & health long time. But at the laſt the Emperors Daughter ſickned to death almoſt. When Socrates perceibed this, he ſaid to himſelf, Alas and woe is me, what ſhall I do, and whether ſhall I flee, if ẏ Emperors Daughter that is my wife ſhould die? And for ſorrow this Socrates went to a Forreſt there beſide and wept bitterly.

Then while he thus wept & mourned, there came an agedman habing a ſtaff in his hand

and

and asked him why he mourned. Socrates answered and said: I espoused the Emperors daughter upon this condition, that if she die in my fellowship, I should lose my life: now she is sickned to death almost, and I can find no remedy nor help, and therefore I mourn.

Then said the old man: Be of good comfort for I shall help you if ye will do after my counsel. In this forrest be three herbs, if you make drink of the first for your wife, and of ȳ other two a plaister, and if ye use this medicinal drink and plaister in due time, without doubt she shall recover her perfect perfect health. Socrates did all that ȳ old man had taught him. And when his wife had used a while that medicinal drink and plaister, within short time she was perfectly whole of al her sickness. And when ȳ Emperor heard that Socrates had so recovered his wife, he promoted him to great honor.

The Moral.

Dear friends, the Emperor is our Lord Jesus Christ, his daughter so fair and so gracious is the soul, made to the similitude of God, which is so glorious in the sight of him and of his Angels, while that she is not defiled, but abideth in her own proper cleanness. This soul God would not give it to a Rich man, but to a poor, that is, a man that is made of the slime of the earth.

This Socrates is a poor man, for why; every man commeth poor & naked into this world from his mothers belly, & every man takes his soul in wedlock upon such condition that if she die in his fellowship by deadly sin without doubt He shall lose eternal life. Therefore O thou man, if thy wife sicken through frailty of flesh, unto sin, do then as Socrates did, go unto the Forrest, that is, the Church of Christ, and thou shalt find there an old man with a staff, that is a discreet Preacher, which shal Minister unto thee these three herbs, whereof may be confected the medicine of thy recovery unto health. The first herb is acknowledging of Sin; the second is repentance: & the third is newness of Life according to the will of God: If these herbs be used in a plaister, the sinner without doubt shal rec ive his health, and his soul shal be delivered from sin, and assuredly he shal have everlasting life, Unto the which bring us our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Argument.

Many foolish Ideots of the world, which flow in abundance of worldly wealth & pomp, thinking the shal live here always are laboured unto by the Preachers of Gods world. & admomonished of their momentany felicities, & prepare themselves in bestowing wel their short time here, that they may enjoy the blessings of everlasting felicity in the World to come. The fifth History.

SOmetime there reigned in Rome a mighty Emperor and a wise, named Frederick, who

who had one only Son, whom he loued much This Emperor when he lay at point of death called unto him his son, and said: Dear son, I haue a Ball of Gold, which I charge thee on my blessing that thou anon after my death shalt giue to the veriest fool thou canst find. Then said his son: My Lord, without doubt your will shall be fulfilled. Anon this young Lord after the death of his Father went and sought many Realms, & found many wretchless fools, but because he would perform his fathers will, he sought til he came to a Realm where the law was such ꝑ every year a new King was chosen, who had the ruling of the Realm for one year only, and at the years end he was deposed, & exiled into an Iland where he finished his life in misery. When the Emperors son came to this Realm, the new King was chosen with great honor, and brought unto his Regal seat with much musick & great reuerence. And when the Emperor saw that, he came unto him, and saluted him reuerently, saying, My Lord, loe I giue you this Ball of gold on my fathers behalf. Then said he: I pray thee tell me the the cause why thou giuest me this Ball: Then answered he and said: My Father charged me on his death-bed, that I should giue this Ball to the most fool I could find: wherefore I haue sought many Realms, and haue found many fools, but a more fool then thou

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I never found: for it is not unknown to thee that thou shalt reign but a year, and at the years ends thou shalt be exiled into such a place, whereas thou shalt die a miserable death, wherefore I hold thee most fool that ever I found, for as much as for the Lordship of a year thou wilt so wilfully lose thy self: and therefore I give thee this Ball. Then said the King, Without doubt thou sayest truely, and therefore while I am now in full power of this Realm, I will send before me great treasure, wherewith I may sustain my self from miserable death, when I shall be exiled and put down. And so this was done: and at the years end when he was exiled, he lived there in peace and quietness, and afterward dyed a good death.

The moral.

Dear friends this Emperor is the Father of Heaven, the which bequeathed the Ball, that is, worldly riches to fools and Ideots, who labour nothing but that is earthly. This Emperors Son, is a Preacher or discreet Minister, that travelleth about many Realms, and Lands, to shew unbelieving men and fools their peril. The Realm wherin no King might reign but a year, is the world. For who so liveth an hundred year, when he dyeth he shall seem to have lived

lived but the space of an year: therefore do as the King did while ye be in power of life, send before you your treasure, that is, firm Faith in Christs merits, and the fruits of Gods Word proceeding from the same; then certainly when we be exiled out of this World, we shall live in peace, and shall find the mercy of God plentifully, whereby we shall obtain eternal life. Unto which bring us, he that for us shed his precious blood.

The Argument.

The evil disposed men of this world are here advertised of their greedy griping after the sweet temptations of the Devil wherein such doth rejoyce till death commeth suddenly upon them, and then they fall into the horrible pit of desolate darkness, due to their desert.

The sixth History.

Diocletian reigned in the City of Rome, in whose Empire dwelt a noble Philosopher, who by his Art set up an Image in the midst of the City of Rome, which Image stretched out his Arm, and his foremost finger, whereupon stood this Posey written in Latine: Percute hic, Strike here. This Image after the death of the Philosopher stood a long time, and many great Clarks came for to read the Superscription that was on the finger, but none understood it; wherefore the people wondred much. A

last, a long time after, there came a strange Clerk out of a far Country, and when he saw the Image he read the superscription, Strike here. And then upon a day when he saw the shadow of the hand, he took a Mattock, and broke up the ground under ỹ hand where the shadow was accoꝛding to the understanding of the superscription, and anon he found an house all of marble underneath the ground wherein he found so much Riches, so many Jewels, and so great Marbels, as he neber saw beꝛoꝛe. And at last he saw a table ready cobered, and all manner of Things necessary there to set there upon. He further beheld and saw a Carbuncle in the Hall that lighted all the House. And against this Carbuncle on the other side, stood a man holding a bow in his hand, and an arrow ready to shoot. The Clerk marbelled much when he saw all these things, and thought with himselfe, that if I tell this forth, there will no man beliebe me, and therefore I will have somewhat of these goods in token thereof. And with that he saw a Knife of Gold upon the Table, the which he took, and would have put in his bosom, but then the Archer smote the Carbuncle and brake it whereby the whole House was shadowed and made dark, which when the Clerk perceibed wept most bitterly, for he knew no way to get out,

for

for as much as the House was made dark through the breaking of the Carbuncle. And the darkness abode there for ever after. And so finished the Clerk his life there in that darkness.

The Moral.

Dear friends, this Image thus standing betokens the Devil, which saith evermore, Strike here, that is, seek after worldly Riches and not for Heavenly Treasure. This Clerk that digged with the Mattock, doth betoken the worldly wise men of this World, as evil disposed Pleaders of the Law, crafty Attorneys and other wicked worldlings, that be ever smiting what by right, and what by wrang, so that they may get the vanities of the World: and in their smiting they find great wonders, that is, they find therein the delights of the world, wherein many men rejoyce. The Carbuncle that giveth light is the youth of man, which giveth hardiness to take their pleasure in worldly riches. The Archer with his Arrow is Death, which lays watch against man to slay him. The Clerk that took up the Knife, betokeneth every worldly man, that coveteth ever to have all things to his will, Till death smiteth the Carbuncle, that is, the youth, strength and power of man, and then lieth he wrapped in the darkness of sin, in which darkness oftentimes he dyeth.

Therefore

Therefore study we to fly the World and her vain delights, & then we shall be sure to win everlasting life, unto which Christ Jesus bring us all, Amen.

The Argument.

We are here generally put in mind, that the Devil besieging the World, our Champion Christ Jesus is ready to take our quarrel into his own hand, who descending and saving us from the invasion and circumvention of Satan, is yet accursed for us as a transgressor, and is content to suffer death for our full justification.

The seventh History.

IN Rome dwelt sometime a mighty Emperor named Titus, who ordained in his days such a law, that what Knight died in the Empire should be buried in his Armour, and whosoever presum'd to spoil any Knight of his Armour after he was dead, should dye without any gain-saying. It befel after few years that a City of the Empire was in danger of the Emperors enemies, and was in danger of losing, for none that were in the City could defend themselves by any manner of policy, wherefore great sorrow and lamentation was made throughout the City.

But at last within few days, there came to the City a young Knight, well-favoured, and valiant in feats of Arms, whom the worthy men of the City beholding, and understanding his prowess, cryed to him with one

one voyce: O thou most noble Knight, we beseech thee to help us now at our must need, for you may see this City is like to be lost, Then he answered and said: Sirs, ye see I have no Armour, but if I had, I would defend your City.

This hearing a mighty man of the City, he said to him secretly: Sir, here lived sometime a valiant Knight who now is dead and buried within the City, and if it please you to take his Armour, ye may defend this City and deliver us from peril, and that will be honour unto you, and profit unto the City.

The young Knight hearing this, went to the Grave and arrayed himself with the Armour: and after much fight obtaind the victory, and delivered the City. Which done, he laid the Armour again in the Grave. But there were some men of the City who envied him because he had obtaind the victory, and accused him to the Judge, saying thus: Sir, a Law was made by the Emperor, that whosoever dispoiled any dead Knight of his Armour should die, This young Knight found a dead Knight, and took away his armour, therefore I beseech thee that thou proceed in ȳ law against him with equity & Justice, in giving him severe punishment for so offending the Law. When the Judge

heard

heard this, he made the Knight to be taken and when he was examined of this his trespass against the Law, he said thus: Sir, it is written in the Law, that of two harms the least is to be chosen. It is not unknown to you, that this City was in peril to be lost, and had I not taken this Armour, I had neither saved you nor the City, therefore methinks you ought rather to honour me for this good deed that I have done, then thus shamefully to reprove me: for I am led as he that is ready to be hanged. Also good Sirs, another thing I may alledge for my excuse: he that stealeth or robbeth violently, purposeth not to restore the thing which he stealeth but it is not thus with me, for though I took the Armour of the dead Knight for your defence and safegard, when I had obtaind the victory, I bare it again to the same place, and to the dead Knight, whose it is by the Law.

Then said the Justice, a Thief that breaketh a House that he may steal and bear away such as he can find, although he bring again that he hath taken, I ask of thee if that the breaking of the House be lawfull or not: The Knight answered, sometimes the breaking of the house may be good, whereas it is made in a feeble place, which would cause the Master of the House to make his

wall

wall stronger, that the Theebes after breake not by force the walls so lightly, for avoiding of more harm.

Then said the Judge, if the breaking of the House be good, nevertheless in that breaking, violence is done to the Lord of the house And so though thou didst restore the Armour of the dead Knight, nevertheless thou didst wrong to the dead Knight in taking away his Armour. The Knight said, I have told you, that of two harms the least is to be chosen; & that harm where through great goodness cometh, ought not to be called harm, it should rather be called good. For if a house within the City were on fire and began to burn, it were better that three or four houses thereby should be thrown to the ground, then that they should be set on fire also, whereby all the City would be burned, right so, if the Armour of the dead Knight had not been taken, the City had been lost.

And when the Judge heard that he answered so well and so reasonably, he could give no judgment against him. But they who had accused this Knight, slew him: for whose death there was great weeping throughout all the City, and his body was honourably buried in a new Tomb.

The Moral.

Dear Friends this Emperor is the Father

of heaven, & this City is the world, which as beſieged of the Devil and deadly ſin, and as many as were within the City, were all perill to be loſt. This young Knight that came to the City, is our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who had not the Armour of humanity, till he went to the grave, that is, the womb of the glorious Virgin Mary, by the annunciation of the Angel, ſaying, The holy Ghoſt ſhall light on thee, &c. Lo, thou ſhalt conceive and bear a Son. And thus in the womb of the Virgin he took the armor of the dead Knight, that is, the manhood of Adam our forefather, & ſaved the city, that is, the world and mankind, by his bleſſed paſſion that he ſuffered on the croſs, & he put the Armor again into the grave, when his bleſſed body was buried, but the citizens enbied him, that is, the Jews accuſed him to Pilate, ſaying: If thou ſuffer him thus thou art not Cæſars friend: we have a law, and after the law he ought to dy, Joh. 19. 21. And thus our Lord Jeſus Chriſt of his enemies was condemned to ẏ death of ẏ croſs, & after aſcended up to heaven, whither he bring us. Amen.

The Argument.

The fornication of wicked worldly men is here directed by the providence of God, and by his gracious favour; the ſinner is delivered out of thraldom of ſin, unto the liberty of life everlaſting.

The

The eight History.

THere reign'd somtime in Rome a mighty Emperor and a wise, named Berold, who ordained a Law, that what woman was taken in adultry, her husband being alive, she should be cast into perpetual Prison. There was that time a Knight ỳ had a fair Lady to his wife, who committed adultry her husband being alive, and was with child, therefore by the Law she was put in prison, where in short time she was delivered of a fair son. The child grew up till he was seven years old, & his mother daily wept bitterly: which when the child heard, he said unto her, O Mother why weep ye thus, ? and for what cause are you thus perplexed ? Then said his Mother: O my sweet Son, I have great cause to mourn, and thou also, for above our heads are people walking, and the Sun shineth in clearnes, and we be here continually in such darknes, that I can neither see thee nor thou me, Alas that ever I conceived thee. Then said the Son, such joy as you speak of I never saw, for I was born here in this darknes, therefore if I had meat and drink enough I should live here all my life: Therefore Mother weep not but be chearful. This lamentation that was between the Mother & the Son the Emperors Steward heard, that stood above their heads thereof he had great compassion, and went

to

to the Emperor, and kneeling beſought him of his Grace, that the Mother and the Son might be delibered out of Priſon. The Emperor as a merciſull Lord granted that they ſhould be delibered. Neberthelels, if they treſpalſed ſo in time to come, they ſhould be puniſhed with double pain. And after ſhe was delibered ſhe libed joyfully.

The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperor is Father of Heaben that made the Law, that what married woman, that is, what ſoul that is eſpouſed to the Lord, & doth commit adultery, that is, doth worſhip ſtrange Gods, ſhould be caſt into the Priſon of Hell, therefore the ſinfull ſoul hath great cauſe to weep, for ſhe is debarred from light, that is, from the joys of Heaben. Her Son that deſired meat and drink, are the wealthy wicked Worldlings, that ſay to the Preachers that preach unto them the joys of Heaben, that while we may libe and habe all the ſolace of the world, we deſire no other Heaben. The Steward that heard their lamentation is the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who knowing all the pribities of our ſorrowfull and repentant hearts for our ſins, beſought the Father of Heaben for us, that we might be delibered from the priſon of hell, and ſo come to eberlaſting life. Unto which be bring us all. Amen.

The

The Argument.

Christ proclaimeth the joyful feast of heaven. whereto the lame, that is, the poor Preachers of the Gospel, having their sight of knowledge in Gods Word, suported by the blind Laity, and each mutually comforting either they approach unto the proclaimed feast of perpetual felicity.

The ninth History

SOmetime in Rome dwelt an Emperor named Pompey, who above all other things was mercifull. This Emperor proclaimed throughout all his Empire a great Feast, and that poor & rich should come to the feast, and whosoever came to that feast should not only be well fed, but also he should have great gifts When the Herauld had warned all manner of men to come to this Feast, at that time there were two poor men lying by the way, the one being lame, and the other blind. Alas, said one of these men to the other, woe to us both, how shall we do? for the Emperor hath proclaimed a Feast, and whosoever cometh thither, shall not only be well fed, but also shall have great gifts, and I am blind and thou art lame, how shal we do? Then said the lame man to the blind man I shal give thee good counsel, if thou wilt do after me I am lame, and feeble, and may not go, nevertheles I can see, and thou art blind but strong: take thou me upon thy back and bear me, and I shal direct the right way, and thus we shal both come to the Emperors feast

Then said the blind man let it be so, get thou on my back, and I shall bear thee, and guide thou me, and so they did, and came both to the feast, and received great rewards, and after ended their lives in peace.

The Moral.

Dear friends, this Emperor is our Sabiour Jesus Christ, that proclaimeth a Feast, that is, the joys of Heaven, unto the which joys he calleth all Mankinde, and forsaketh no man that will come unto him. This lame man betokeneth ỳ poor Ministers of ỳ Gospel which wanting worldly wealth, live by the Providence of God; And this blind man betokeneth the Lay-men, who know not the right way to heaven. It behoveth the blind man, that is, the Lay-men, to bear the lame man, that is, the Ministers of the Gospel, sustaining & feeding them with the duties of the Church: and the Ministers in Gods cause are bound to teach and to inform us in the way to Heaven, whereas we shall not only have a feast, but also great reward and joy. Unto which God bring us all. Amen.

The Argument.

Heaven and Hell are here compared to two Cities, these Cities are two contrary ways: to Heaven (which is the City of all heavenly treasure and felicity) is a narrow, crooked, craggy and painfull way, having three enemies, the Devil, the World and the Flesh. To Hell (being the

the City or ſink of ſorrow and ſadneſs) a fair way; broad, plain, and eaſie, having three guides, that is, Pride of life, Covetouſneſs of the eys, and Concupiſcenee of the fleſh.

The tenth Hiſtory.

SOmetime in Rome dwelt an Emperor named Folliculus, who was very wiſe and merciful in all his works. This Emperor builded in the Eaſt a Noble City, wherein he put all his treaſure to be kept. Unto this City the way was ſtony, full of Wzambles and ſharp Thornes, and three Knights were armed ready to fight with them that would come to that City. Therefore the Emperor ordained that whoſoever obercame theſe Knights ſhould enter the City, and take at his will of the Emperors treaſure. After that this Emperor did make in the North a City wherein he ordained all manner of pain, ſorrow, and tormenting for malefactors, to which was a broad way very deleutable, growing full of Roſes and fair Lillies, and in their way were three Knights eber waiting, if any man came towards the City of the North, to ſerbe him with all manner of delicates and neceſſary prohiſion, And if it fortuned that any man did enter within that City, the cuſtome was ſuch, that the people would bind him hand and foot, and caſt him into priſon there to abide the ſentence of the Judge.

When this was cryed throughout all the

Empire, there were two Knights dwelling in one City, one named Jonathas, who was a wise man, the other called Pirrhus, who was a Fool, nevertheless there had continued between them great love. This Jonathas said to Pirrhus, Dear friend there is a common cry made throughout all the Land, that the Emperor hath made a City in the East, wherein he hath put his treasure, and whosoever may enter that City, shall take what he will of the treasure, therefore let us go thither.

Then said Pirrhus, Thy Counsel is good, let us go. The wise Knight said, If it be so that thou wilt follow my counsel, I pray thee that faithful friendship may continue between us, and in token of love thou shalt drink my blood, and I will drink thine, on this condition, that neither of us leave other in this journey. The Foolish Knight said, it pleaseth me right well, therefore they were both let blood, and each of them drank others blood. When this was done, they went forth together on their journey, and when they had gone three days journey toward the City where their treasures was, they came to a place where were two ways, one sharp, and stony, and full of Thornes, the other fair, and plain, and full of delights. Then said the wise Knight to his fellow: Dear Friend,

here are two ways, one sharp and thorny, nevertheless if we go this way, we shall come to a City that is so rich, and there we shall have that we desire. Then said the foolish knight to his fellow, I wonder greatly at you, that you will speak such things, for I will rather believe mine eyes then your words. I see here openly, and so do you, that here is a hard way and full of thorns, and as I have heard there be three Champions armed in this way ready to fight against all men that go towards the City of the East, and therefore I will not go that way, but here is (as you may see) another way plain and easie to walk in, and in this way are three knights ready to serve us, and give all manner of things delightfull for us: and therefore by this way will I go, and not by that other way. Then said the wise knight Certainly if we go by that way, we shall be led into the City of the North, wherein there is no mercy, but perpetual pain and sorrow, and there we shall be taken and bound and cast into prison. Certainly said the foolish knight, this way is the ready way, and as I believe it is more profitable then the other way. Then went they both forth the fair way, and anon three knights met with them, which received them courteously for one night, and gave them all manner of things that were

pleasant

pleasant to them. And on the morrow they took their journey forth toward the City, and when they were within the City, anon the Emperors Officers met with them, and said, Friend, why came ye hither? insomuch that ye knew the Law of this City is so cruel of long time heretofore: surely ye shall be served now after the Law. Anon they took the wise Knight, and brought him, and cast him into prison, and after that they took the foolish Knight, and bound him fast, and cast him into a Ditch. Soon after it befell that the Judge came to the City to give judgment on them that had trespassed the Law, and anon all the prisoners were brought forth before the Judge, among whom these two Knights were brought forth, one from prison, and the other from the ditch. Then said the wise Knight to the Judge: My reverend Lord, I complain of my fellow that is guilty of my death: for when we two came to the two ways, whereof the one led to the City of the East, and the other to this City, I told him all the peril of this City, and the reward of that other City, but he would not believe me, but said to me in this wise; I will believe mine own eyes better then thy words, and because he was my fellow, I would not let him go alone in this way: and thus came I with him, wherefore he is the cause of my death.

Then

Then said the foolish knight, I complain that he is the cause of my death: for it is not unknown to you all, that I am a Fool and he a wise man, and therefore he should not so lightly have followed my folly, for if he had forsaken this way, I should have followed him, and therefore he is cause of my death. Then said the Judge to the wise Knight, because that thou with all the wisdom, so lightly consentedst and followedst the will of the fool, and his foolish works: and thou Fool, because thou didst reject the good counsel and advice of the wise, and wouldest not beleive him, I give Judgement, that ye both be hanged for your trespass: and so it was done. Wherefore all men praised greatly the Judge for his discreet judgement.

The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperor is Almighty God, and in the East is the City of Heaven wherein is treasure infinite: And unto this City is a hard way and full of Thorns, that is, the way of Repentance, by which way full few walk: for it is hard and straight according to the holy Scripture, saying thus Arcta est via quæ ducit ad vitam, It is a straight way that leadeth to everlasting life. In this way are three armed Knights, that is the Devil, the World, and the Flesh: with whom it behoveth us to fight, and to

obtain the victory, before we may come to Heaven. The second City that is in the North, is Hell: and to this accordeth the scripture, saying thus, Ab aquilione ponetur omne malum: Out of the North cometh all evil. Certainly to this City the way is plain and broad, and walled about on eyer side with all manner of delights, wherefore many men walk by this way. The three Knights that give to every man going this way what thing they please, are these, Pride of life, Covetousness of the eys, and Concupiscence of the flesh: in which three the wretched man greatly delighteth, and at the last they lead him to Hell. This witty Knight betokeneth the soul, and the foolish Knight betokeneth the flesh, which is always foolish and at all times ready to do evil. These two are fellows and knit in one: for either of them drink others blood, that is, they shall drink of one cup either of joy or pain, which they shall have after the day of Doom.

The soul chooseth the way of repentance and in as much as she may, she stirreth the flesh to do the same. But the flesh never thinketh what shall come after, and therefore she goeth in the delights of this World, and flieth the the vertue of Repentance. And thus the soul after death is cast into Hell, and the flesh is cast into the ditch, that is, into the grave.

grabe. But when the Judge commeth, that is, our Lord Jesus Christ, at the last day to judge all mankind, Then the Soul shall complain upon the flesh, and the flesh upon the soul: But then the Judge, that cannot be deceived shall condemn the Soul, because she followed the frailty of the flesh, and the flesh because it would not believe the Soul. Wherefore let us study to tame our flesh that we may obey God, and then we shall have eternal life. Unto which bring us our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

The Argument.

The Soul of man being possest of the Princely Territory of Paradise, was by the Devil provoked to sin against her Creator, and for the same transgression (being thence into the World exiled) lost that heritage: but by Christs blessed Death and Passion was restored to a more happy heritage of everlasting felicity.

The eleventh History.

THere dwelt sometime in Rome a mighty Emperor named Frederick, which had no child, but one only Daughter, to whom this Emperor after his decease bequeathed all his Empire. This understanding an Earl that dwelt there beside, he came to this young Lady and wooed her, and provoked her to sin all that he might: whereby this young Lady in short process of time inclined to the Earl, and this Earl anon lay with her and defiled

defiled her: and after that he drabe her from her heritage and exiled her out of the Empire, wherefore she made great lamentation, and fled unto a Realm there beside, where she daily wept and mourned.

It befel after on a day, that while she sate mourning by the highway side, there came riding by her a fair young Knight upon a Horse, who came towards her a great pace, and very courteously saluted her, asking her the cause why she mourned so sore. Then answered she and said: My reverend Lord, I am an Emperors daughter, descended of Royal blood, my Father is dead, who left me all his Empire, because he had no other Heir. And after his decease an Earl there beside deceived me, deflowred my virginity, and after that he put me violently out of my heritage, so that now I am fain to beg my bread from door to door, and this is the cause of my sorrow. Then said the Knight: Fair Damsel, I have great compassion on thy beauty and on thy comliness: therefore if thou wilt grant me one thing, I will fight for thee against the Earl, and I wil assure thée the victory. Then said she Alas good sir, I have nothing that I may give unto you but my self; And I ask no more of thée, said the Knight, but that thou would be my wife, and love no man so much as me

me. Then said she: Reverend sir, that I will do gladly, and more if I might. Then said the Knight: I will that thou do nothing for me, but if it fortune me to die in the fight for thee, and obtain the victory, thou shalt take my bloody shirt, and hang it upon a beam in thy Chamber: and this thou shalt do for two causes: The first is, that whensoever thou beholdest the shirt, thou shalt weep for me. The second is, that whatsoever man cometh to woo thee to be his wife, thou shalt then hastily run unto thy Chamber and there beholding my bloody shirt, think hartily within thy self thus.

The Lord of this shirt died for my love in battle, by which he recovered my heritage. God forbid I should take any other man after his death. Then said she, Reverend sir, all this I shal fulfill by the grace of God. And when the Knight heard this, he assayed to fight against the said Earl, and obtained the victory, and the Earl was overcome and fled, and this young Lady was brought and restored again into her heritage. Nevertheless the Knight was deadly wounded in that battel, whereof he died: but ere he died he bequeathed his bloody shirt unto this Damsel, desiring her to keep her promise. When this young Lady heard of his death she wept sore, for in his shirt was wrought thus.

Think

Think on me and have in mind,
Him that to thee was so kind.

Anon when she had received this shirt she hanged it upon a beam in her Chamber and as oft as she beheld it, she wept bitterly. It befell not long after, that the States of the Empire came to her, and desired her to take an husband: but then she went to her chamber, and beheld the bloody shirt and waxed sorrowfull, and said oftentimes, woe and alas, thou sufferedst death for my love, and thou also recoveredst again my heritage: God forbid that I should take any other man but thee. And thus she answered every man that came to her: and so they went away disappointed of their purpose, and she ended her life in rest.

The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperor is the Father of Heaven, and this Daughter is the Soul of Man, made to the similitude of God: to whom he gave and bequeathed the Empire of Paradise. But there came the Earl, that is, the Devil, and provoked her to sin, when she eat of the Apple, And said to her thus: In what hour ye eat of this Apple ye shall be Gods. Wherefore we breaking Gods Commandement were exiled out of Paradise, to live in this World in great wretchedness,

as

the Scripiure saith: In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat thy bread. But then came a fair young Knight, and a strong, that is, our Lord Jesus Christ, who had compassion upon Mankind, and taking upon him our flesh and blood, gave battle to the Devil and overcame him: and thus wone he again our Heritage. Therefore let us be as this young Ladie did, let us lay this bloody shirt, that is the remembrance of the passion of Christ on the beam of our hearts, let us think how our Lord Jesus shed his precious blood for us. And if any man, that is, if the Devil, or any other would stir us to sin, let us think presently on the passion of Christ, saying thus: I wil take none other but thee, who hast shed thy blood for me, and thus shal we win everlasting life. Unto which God bring us all. Amen.

The Argument.

We are here generally advertised of honouring the Sabbath day: how, for the redeeming of time, to be occupied in ghostly contemplation, is profitable to the soul and body. Also Preachers of Gods Word oftentime, for saying truth purchase ill will. If we bestow our talents in the amplyfying of our Faith, and furthering one of another with good works, we shall in them inherit the fruition of eternal life prepared for Christs Elect.

The twelfth History.

IN Rome sometimes dwelt a mighty Emperour named Apollonius, who ordained

a Law, that every man upon pain of death ſhould celebrate the day of his Natiuity. This Emperor called to them a Clark that was hight Virgil and ſaid: My dear Maſter there be many hanious offences done in my Empire contrary to the Law, therefore I pray thee that thou by thy cunning would make ſome craft, whereby I may know who treſpaſſeth againſt ỳ Law priuately or openly. Then ſaid Virgil, My reuerend Lord your will ſhal be done, anon this Virgil through his craft made an Image in ỳ midſt of ỳ City of Rome, which denounced and told all the Emperors Meſſengers who treſpaſſed againſt the Law, and who not. There was at that time dwelling in the City of Rome a Smith that hight Focus, which by no means would celebrate the Natiuity of the Emperor. It befell upon a night as the Smith lay in his bed, he thought upon the Image that accuſed many men before, dreading leaſt the Image would accuſe him, wherefore he aroſe and went to the Image, and ſaid, I make a Vow to God, if thou accuſe me I ſhal break thy head and when he had ſaid thus he went home. The Emperor on the morrow following ſent Meſſengers to the Image (as before time he was accuſtomed) to know and underſtand who had treſpaſſed againſt the Law. And to them then ſaid the Image lift up your eyes and

behold

behold what is ingraben in the forehead. And when they looked up, they ſaw this poſey written. Times be changed and men become worſe and worſe: for he that will ſay the truth ſhall have his head broken. Therefore go ye forth to your Lord, and tell him all that ye have heard and ſeen. The Meſſengers went forth and told the Emperor all they had heard and ſeen.

Then ſaid the Emperor arm your ſelves and go to the Image, and if that you find any man that hath menaced or threatned to hurt the Image, bind him hand and foot, and bring him unto me. Then went the Meſſengers forth to the Image, and ſaid to it: tell us the truth, if any man have threatned thee, and we ſhall revenge thee anon. Then ſaid the Image, Take ye Smith Focus, for he is the man that will not honor the Nativity of the Emperor; Straightway the Meſſengers led forth the Smith before the Emperor: and there examined him, why he kept not the day of the Emperors Nativity in reverence and honor, according to the Law: Then anſwered the Smith and ſaid: Reverend Lord, I beſeech you that you will hear mine excuſe; if I anſwer not reaſonably to all manner of points that ye ſhall ask me, I will yeild me fully to your grace: then ſaid the Emperor I will hear thee, and that which is right, that I will do.

Then

Then said the Smith, I must have eight pence every day in the week, and that I cannot get without great labour, and therefore I may not keep that day holy-day more then other days. Then said the Emperor, why must thou have this eight pence? Then said the Smith, I am bound to pay daily two pence, and two pence I lend, and two pence I lose, and two pence I spend: Then said the Emperor, tell me more expressly of these eight pence; Then said the Smith, I am bound every day to pay two pence to my Father, for when I was young he spent daily two pence on me, which I am bound to pay him again for his sustentation: and two pence I lose on my wife. Then said the Emperor why losest thou that two pence on thy wife? Then said he: where saw ye ever a woman but she had one of these properties, either she was wilfull and contrary to her husband, or hot of complexion: and therefore that I give her I lose; and two pence I lend to my son wherewith he is sustained, that when I come to age and poberty he may pay me two pence againe, like as I do my Father. And I spend two pence on my self in meat and drink and that is little enough. Then said the Emperor, thou hast answered well and wisely. Not long after the Emperor died, and this Smith Focus was chosen to be be Emperor by

caul

ause he spent his eight pence so wisely and so profitably, and thus he ended his life in peace and rest.

The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperor is our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, which ordained by his holy Law, that every one should keep holy the Sabbath day. This Virgil that made that Image is the holy Ghost, who established among us Preachers to teach vertues and reprove vices, and they should not spare the poor nor the rich. But now if a Preacher should speak the truth against any man, he shall be threatned by the enemies of Christ, that is, by evil men that neither love God nor man. Wherefore the Preacher may say now adays, that Verse which was written in the fore-head of the Image. Times be changed from good to ill, and men be daily worse: for who so would speak the truth now adayes shall have his head broken. Therefore it is needful they be armed, that is, ought to be armed with vertuous examples of good life, and then they need not fear, because they have the truth of God to stand for them according to the Apostles saying: If God be for us who can be against us. By this Smith Focus, is understood the good Christian man, who daily should spend his time in redeeming every hours trab el

with some profit corporal or spiritual: and then ought he to be presented before the Emperor. This Focus paid two pence to the Father, and so we should pay to our Father of Heaven two pence, that is, honor and love. For when we were children of wretchedness, and in bondage, Almighty God sent down to y earth his Son to redeem us, according to S. John the Evangelist, saying, God loved the world so well, that he gave his only begotten Son for the salvation of the world. Also this Focus lent two pence to his Son: that is, every Christian man ought to lend to the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, true and unfeigned faith, and fruitful good works and deeds in our life, and he will repay us again at the day of doom with his heavenly mercy, when soul and body shall be glorified, and that he is our brother may be proved by the text of Esay, saying, A child is born to us. This Focus lost two pence to his wife: his wife betokens the flesh, upon whom thou losest two pence, that is, unlawful love and consent to sin, because the flesh is contrary to the spirit, and is ever subject to sin. This Focus also spent two pence on himself: by the first penny ye shall understand repentance, whereat the Angels in Heaven do greatly rejoyce: by the second penny ye shall under-

stand

and by erfect perseberance in amendment of life: for he that abideth unto the end shal be saued. And he that spendeth wel these two pence shall obtain everlasting life; Unto which bring us our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Argument.

Man being blinded through sin, and either by infirmity of frail flesh, or suggestion trespasing with evil and lewd company, though God of his mercy be favourable unto him in his life time by reason of the foresaid respect, yet if he accustomedly walk onforward in this Worldly wickedness, his wilful blindness shall not excuse him, but accuse him in the day of judgement, most grievously to have offended God, in abusing his mercy offered, and therefore the less worthy to have the reward of the simple soul, that repentantly and with modesty liveth to the fruition of of everlasting blisse.

The thirteenth History.

Somtime in Rome dwelt a noble Emperor which among all other vertues loved best mercy: wherefore he ordained a Law, that every blinde man should have an hundred shillings by year of his treasure. It befel on a day, that certain men came to a Tauern to drink wine, and that these men did sitten in ỹ Tabern three days, the fourth day they were greatly in debt for the Wine: wherefore the Vintner came to hem and demanded money for his Wine. Then spake one of the Drinkers, Sirs, the Emperor

peroz hath made such a Law, that every blind man shall have an hundred shillings of his treasure: therefore let us cast lots among us, and to whom the lot falleth, let his eys be put out, and so he may go to the Emperors Palace, and get an hundred shillings to discharge us. Now this counsel liked them well, so they cast lots; and the lot fell on him that gave the counsel, and his fellows immediately put out his eys.

And when he was blind, he went to the Emperors Palace, and asked an hundred shillings of the Steward according to the Emperors Decree. Dear Friends, said the Steward, thou didst see with both thine eyes a while since, thou also understandest the Law amiss: for the Law is made for men that are blind through infirmities, or by the will of God, but the other day thou badst by fight in the Tabern, and hast wilfully lost it. Therefore go to the Tabern againe to thy fellows, and discharge what thou owest, for here getteſt thou not a farthing. Then went this wretched man forth and told his fellows of the Stewards answer, and with that came in the Wintner and dispoiled them of all their cloaths, and beat them, and thrust them with shame out of the City: And so were they never after seen there.

The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperor is our Sir our Christ, who ordained a Law, that every blind man should have an hundred shillings of his treasure. The blind man betokeneth every Sinner, who sinneth through infirmity, or the inticing of the Devil, the World and the flesh, and shal receive an hundred shillings: if he be inwardly repentant of his sins: that is, he shal have an hundred times more joy, according to the Scripture, saying ye shall receive an hundred times more joy if ye repent and turn from sin, and all ye shall have everlasting life. These men that came to the Tabern to drink Wine, be Sinners, who often times come to the Tabern of our Adversary the Devil, to drink of his carnal appetites, that is, they there consume and waste away all spiritual vertues, which they, received the Sacrament of Baptism. Where the Devil our enemy dispoileth them of all their good deeds that ever they have wrought before. They cast lots, that is, they cast among them the custome of sin, and this lot of sin falleth on such as are unthankful and mercilefs: and such a man wilfully become wilful, a foul sinner like Judas that betrayed our Lord without any suggestion or inticing. And therefore such men sin must grievously. When they com before ȳ Steward,

that, before the Prelates of the Church, they can hardly obtain an assurance of heaven, because they be not in the right way to leave their sin. Therefore let us study with all diligence to please God, that we may obtain everlasting life, which is laid up in store for all those that live modestly, looking for eternal salvation. Unto which bring us Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Argument.

A certain faithful vow of love being made between the soul of every faithful Christian and Jesus Christ we are to consider the merciful and gracious Covenant of God toward the faithful, & to be careful of this Covenant, and we are to study to perform our vow so as we at the prefixed day of promise being undefiled, may thereby purchase the promised place of everlasting glory, prepared for all them that seek the glory of God, and their soul's health.

The fourteenth History.

IN Rome sometime dwelt a mighty Emperor named Philominus, who had one only Daughter who was fair and gracious in the sight of every man, who had to name Aglaes. There was also in the Emperors Palace a gentle Knight that loved dearly this Lady. It befel after on a day, that this Knight talked with this Lady, and secretly uttered his desire unto her. Then she said courteously seeing you have uttered to me the secrets of your heart, I will likewise for your love utter to you the secrets of my heart, and truly I say; that

that above all other I love you best. Then said the Knight, I purpose to visit the holy Land, and therefore give me your troth, that this seven years you shall take no other man, but only for my love to tarry for me so long, and if I come not again by this day seven years, then take what man you like best. And likewise I promise you, that within this seven years I will take no wife. Then said she this Covenant pleaseth me well. When this was said, each of them was betrothed to other, and then this Knight took his leave of the Lady and went to the holy Land. Shortly after the Emperor treated with the King of Hungaria for the marriage of his Daughter. Then came the K. of Hungary to the Emperors Palace to see his Daughter, & when he had seen her, he liked marbelous well her beauty and her behaviour, so that the Emperor and the King were accorded in all things as touching the marriage, upon the condition that the Damsel would consent. Then called the Emperor the young Lady to him, and said: O my fair Daughter, I have provided for thee, that a King shall be thy Husband if thou list consent, therefore tell me what answer thou wilt give to this. Then said she to her Father, it pleaseth me well: but one thing dear Father I intreat of you,

if it might please you to grant me: I have vowed to keep my Virginity, and not to marry this seven years, therefore dear Father, I beseech you for all the love that is between your gracious Fatherhood and me, that name no man to be my Husband til these seven years be ended, and then I shall be ready in all things to fulfil your will. Then said the Emperor, sith it is so that thou hast thus vowed, I will not break thy Vow, but when these seven years be expired thou shalt have the King of Hungary to thy Husband.

Then the Emperor sent forth his Letters to the King of Hungary, praying him if it might please him to stay seven years for the love of his Daughter, and then he should speed without fail. Herewith the King was pleased and content to stay the prefixed day.

And when the seven years were ended save a day, the young Lady stood in her Chamber window and wept sore, saying: Woe and alas, as to morrow my Love promised to be with me again from the Holy Land: and also the King of Hungary to morrow will be here to marry me, according to my Fathers promise: and if my love comes not at a certain hour, then am I utterly deceived of the inward love I bear to him.

When

When the day came, the King hasted toward the Emperor to marry his Daughter, and was royally arrayed in Purple. And while the King was riding on his way, there came a Knight riding on his way, there said, I am of the Empire of Rome, and now am lately come from the holy Land, and I am ready to do you the best service I can And as they rode talking by the way, it began to rain so fast, that all the Kings apparel was sore wet, Then said the Knight: My Lord ye have done foolishly, for as much as ye brought not with you your house: Then said the King: Why speakest thou so; My house is large and broad, and made of stones, and mortar, how should I bring that with me my house? thou speakest like a fool. When this was said, they rod on till they came to a great deep water, and the King smote his horse with his spurs and leapt into the water, so that he was almost drowned. When the Knight saw this, and was over on the other side of the water without peril, and he said to the King, ye were in peril, and therefore ye did foolishly, because ye brought not with you your Bridge. Then said the King, thou speakest strangely, my Bridge is made of lime and stone, and containeth in quantity more then half a mile, how should I then bear with me my Bridge?

therefore

therefore thou speakest foolishly. Well sai
the Knight, my foolishness may turn thee t
wisdom. When the King had ridden a littl
further, he asked the Knight what time o
day it was. Then said the Kt. if any man hath
list to eat, it is time of the day to eat, there-
fore my Lord, pray take a modicum with me,
for that is no dishonor to you, but great ho-
nor to me before the States of this Empire:
Then said the King: I will gladly eat with
thee, They sate both down in a fair Wine
Garden, and there dined together, both the
King and the Knight. And when dinner was
done, and that the King had washed, the
Knight said to the King: My Lord, ye have
done foolishly, for that yee brought not
with you your Father and Mother. Then
said the King: what sayest thou? my Father
is dead, and my Mother is old and may not
travel how should I then bring them with
me? therefore to say the truth, a foolisher
man then thou art did I never hear. Then
said the Knight, every work is praised at
the end.

When the Knight had ridden a little further,
and nigh the Emperors Palace, he asked
leave to go from him, for he knew a nearer
way to the Palace, to the young Lady,
that he might come first, and carry her away
with him. Then said the King, I pray

thee

thee tell me by what place thou purposest to ride? Then said the Knight, I shall tell you the truth: this day seven years I left a Net in a place, and now I purpose to visit it, and draw it to me, and if it be whole, then will I take it to me, and keep it as a precious Jewel, if it be broken, then will I leave it: and when he had thus said, he took his leave of the King, and rode forth, but the King kept the broad high way.

When the Emperor heard of the Kings coming, he went towards him with a great company, and royally received him, causing him to shift his wet cloaths, and to put on fresh apparel. And when the Emperor and the King were set at meat, the Emperor welcomed him with all the chear and solace that he could. And when he had eaten, the Emperor asked tidings of the King, My Lord said he, I shall tell you what I have heard this day by the way. There came a Knight to me, and reverendly saluted me: and anon after there fell a great rain, and greatly spoiled my apparel. And anon the Knight said: Sir, ye have done foolishly, for that you brought not with you your house. Then said the Emperor: what cloathing had the Knight on? A cloak quoth the King. Then said the Emperor, surely that was a wise

man

man, for the houſe whereof he ſpake was cloak, and therefore he ſaid to you that you did foliſhly, becauſe you came without your cloak, then your cloaths had not been ſpoiled with rain. Then ſaid the King, when he had ridden a little further, we came to a deep water, and I ſmote my Horſe with my ſpurs, and I was almoſt drowned, but he rid through the water without any peril, then ſaid he to me, you did foliſhly for that you brought not with you your Bridge. Merily ſaid the Emperar, he ſaith truth: for he called the Bridge the Squires, that ſhould have ridden before you, and aſſaid the deepneſs of the water. Then ſaid the King, we rode further, and at the laſt he prayed me to Dine with him. And when he had Dined, he ſaid, I did unwiſely, becauſe I brought not with me my Father and Mother. Truely ſaid the Emperor, he was a wiſe man, and ſaith truth: for he called your Father and Mother, bread, and wine, and other victuals. Then ſaid the King: we rode further, and anon after he asked me leave to go from me, and I asked earneſtly whither he went: And he anſwered again, and ſaid: this day ſeven I years, I left a Net in a private place, and now I will ride to ſee it, and if it be broken and torn, then will I

leave

leave it: but if it be as I lest it, then shall it be unto me right precious. When the Emperor heard this, he cried with a loud voice and said O ye my Knights & Servants, come ye with me spedily unto my daughters Chamber, for surely that is the Net of which he spake; And forthwith his Knights and Servants went unto his Daughters Chamber, and found her not, for the foresaid Knight had taken her with him. And thus the King was deceived of the Damsel. And he went home again to his own Country ashamed.

The moral.

Dear Friends this Emperor is our Lord Jesus Christ, and his fair Daughter is everlasting life, which the Emperor had ordained, for Kings, Knights, and other men; The Knight that lobed this young Lady, is every good Christian soul, which holdeth himself not worthy to come into the sight of God unto such joy, as the Apostle saith, The sufferings of this time are not worthy to attain to the glory that is to come. This Knight was seven years absence from his lobe: like as a good Christian all days of his life, should labour and trabel in fulfilling the seven works of mercy. By the King that came without a Cloak in the rain, is to be understood some mighty men in this World, which have Cloaks to cober all their other cloaths. By this

this Cloak is understood Charity, as the Apostle saith: Charity covereth a multitude of sins: but many men have not this Cloak, wherefore they are wet with the rain of Pride, Avarice and Lechery. This King also was almost drowned, because he lacked his Bridge, that is, perfect faith: for as we see that no men pass over a great water, broad and deep, without a Bridge, or some other thing that is able to bear him: Right so, without faith it is impossible to please God: for Christ saith, If ye have faith as a grain of Mustard-seed, then you may say to the hils, remove out of your places, and they shall remove. But many of us now adays have very feeble faith, and therefore do suddenly fall into the clay of desperation, and by deadly sins oftentimes offend God. Also this King had not brought with him his father and mother: By the father which is cause of generation, is understood Humility, without which there is no vertue in any man, and thereto accordeth S. Gregory, saying, He that gathereth all other vertues without Humility, is like a man that casteth dust into the wind. His Mother betokeneth hope: therefore he that will obtain everlasting blessed life, must have the Cloak of Charity, the Bridge of Faith, and a Father of Meek-

ness,

nes, and y Mother of Hope, as the Apostle saith.

Also this Knight went the narrow way, and the King the broad way: for he that will be saved must go a straight way: that is, the way of Abstinence, Almes deeds, Charity, and Repentance. Of the which way speaketh the Apostle. The way is straight that leadeth unto everlasting life. But many men go y other way which leadeth to hell, that is by the way of the fleshly lust: and such men go out of the way of everlasting life. Therefore study we to walk the narrow way, that thereby we may obtain everlasting life.

The Argument.

By the History is figured, as appeareth in the Moral the Soul of every good Christian, held of him as his Daughter: but being seduced, carried away and defiled by Satan her foul enemy, she is reduced by the help and valiant prowess of her heavenly Champion Christ Jesus, unto her former habitation. Yet man being ungratefull to his Redeemer, forgetteth his duty, and for good rewards ever to his Champion Christ Jesus, delivering him to be judged by the law, as an Offender: but when the Champion avoucheth what he hath done for man and his soul, then he is with shame of his ingratitude constrained to remorse, and call for grace to repent and amend his life, that by the death of his Champion Christ, he may obtain eternal life.

The fifteenth History.

Omtime dwelt in Rome a noble Emperor named Agias, which hath retained unto his

him a Knight named Gerard, which was a worthy Warriour, nevertheleſs he was as a Lamb in the Emperors Court, but in the field he was like a Lion. This Emperor had a fair Daughter, whom the ſtrong and mighty Earl of Peleſter carried by force away and defiled, which more diſpleaſed the Emperor then the carrying her away. Therefore he called unto him his Counſel, and ſaid, Dear Friends, the violence done to me in deflowring of my Daughter is not unknown to you, and therefore I purpoſe to give battel to the Earl; wherefore I pray you to be ready at a day, that ye may proceed with me in battel. And they ſaid: Sir, we be ready to live and die with you in battel.

When the appointed day of Battel came, they met on both ſides, and a cruel ſharp conflict was proſecuted on both ſides, and almoſt all on the Emperors part was ſlain. And as the Emperor himſelf was forcibly aſſailed, the Knight Gerard put himſelf among the Enemies before the Emperor, and fought manfully, and ſo the Emperor eſcaped, and the Knight abode and ſlew the Earl, nevertheleſs the Knight had divers Wounds, Notwithſtanding this, he abode ſtill till the blood ran down his his foot. And when his Enemies ſaw that the Earl was ſlain, they fled, and the Knight with his people followed on the

chaſe

chase till they came to the place where the Emperors Daughter was, and led her with him. And thus with triumph and victory he returned again to the Emperor. For the which victory, and re-obtaining of the Emperors Daughter, he was greatly praised of all people. Not long after it befel, that this knight had a sute in the Emperors Court wherefore the Knight came unto the Emperor, and prayed him meekly to be favourable to his cause: and furthermore desired him to do reason touching his honest demand.

When the Emperor had heard him, he called to him a Judge, and said, Sir, Our will is, that you do all equity unto this knight. And when the knight heard this, he cried with a loud voice: Alas, alas, who ever heard of such an Emperor? Thou wert (said he) in battel, where thy head should have been smitten off, and I in mine own person (and none other man) put my self in jeopardy for thee: and now thou hath assigned another man to be Judge in me cause: alas that ever thou wert born; and with that word the knight put off all his cloaths, and shewed the wounds that he had received in the battel, unto all the men that were there present, and said: Lo, what have I suffered for thee, O Emperor, I did put no other man in my stead, and now thou assignest another man

in my cause. Soothly, I say to thee, that I never served such a Lord before

When the Emperor heard this, being almost confounded in himself, he said: O dear Friend, all that thou sayest is truth, thou savedst me from death, thou didst re-obtain my Daughter again, and for my sake thou hast suffered many wounds: verily it is right, that I in my own person come down and make an end of thy cause, so as may be to thy content, and to mine honor,

And then the Emperor laboured very busily in this matter, and made thereof an end according to the Knights request: whereof all men greatly commended the Emperor.

The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperor may be called every Christian man, or else all mankind, which had a fair Daughter, that is to say, the soul, made to the similitude of God. This Earl betokeneth the Devil, which carrieth away, deflloureth by sin the soul of man, through eating the fruit of the forbidden Tree: wherefore all mankind was in thraldom, till a strong and valiant Knight came and put himself on the Cross to suffer death, as a Redeemer of mankind from the Devil. For if that had not been, we had been all partakers of thraldom everlastingly: and this Knight

reduced and re-obtained the soul of man unto the Church, wherefore he suffered many great wounds in his body. And now this knight, that is, our Lord Jesus Christ hath a matter to do among us, that is, to find us perfect faith: wherefore he calleth on us daily, that we should be ready at all times, saying thus in Apocalyps the third, Lo I stand and knock at the door, if any man will open to me, I will come in and sup with him. But many men do as the Emperor did, the which appointed the knight another Judge than himself; for now adays there be some men that will do no repentance for the love of him which assigned no other man but himself to fight for us. And therefore against unthankful persons it shall be said thus. Lo, he suffered for us on the Cross, dispoiled of all his cloathing, and shewed to us all his wounds that he suffered.

We we therefore thankfull unto God for all his graces, and be content that we may suffer for his love some sorrowful repentance. For he that suffereth pain for the love of God in this life, shall receive a hundred times more reward in the life everlasting. Unto the which our Lord Jesus Christ bring all man kind. Amen.

The Argument.

The Soul of man is here warned to eschew the pleasant baits, and subtil crafts of the Devil, that she yeild not to his allurement lest he get the vantage of this mortal course from her, and bereave her of her her joyes in the life to come.

The sixteenth History.

THere dwelt sometime in Rome a wise Emperor named Pompey, which had a vertuous Daughter named Aglas. This Damsel had many endowments above all other women in that Empire.

First she was fair and gracious in the sight of every man: also she was swift in running, so that no man might overtake her by a right Race. When the Emperor understood these two Properties in his Daughter, he was right joyfull: Wherefore he proclaimed throughout all his Empire, that what man poor or rich would run with his Daughter, should have her to wife, with great riches, if he could over-run her, and come sooner to the mark than she: and if she over-run him, and came sooner to the mark then he, his head should be smitten off.

When the States of that Empire, as Dukes, Earls, Barons and Knights, heard this cry they offered themselves one after another to run with her, but ever this yong Lady over-ran them all: wherefore they lost their heads according to the Law.

That

That time there was a poor man dwelling in Rome, which thought within himself, I am a poor man, and come of poor kindred, there is a common cry made, that what man soever can out-run the Emperors Daughter by any means, shall be promoted to great honour and riches: now therefore if I might over-run her by any manner of way, I should not onely be promoted to great honour, but also all my kindred. Then this poor man provided himself of three things, whereby he might win her; First he he made a Garland of red Roses and white. Secondly, he made a rich girdle of Silk cunningly wrought. Thirdly, he made a Purse of Silk, imbroydered with precious stones, and within the Purse was a Ball of three colours, and upon this Ball was written this Posey, Who so playeth with me, shall not be weary of my play. Then put he these three things in his bosome, and went forth to the Palace gate, crying and saying: Come forth fair Lady, for I am ready to run with you, and to fulfill the Law in all things.

When the Emperor heard this, he commanded his Daughter to run with him. This young Lady went to her Chamber window, and when she saw him, she despised him, and said: I have overcome many worthy Knights, and now must I run

with a Churl nevertheless I will fulfil my Fathers commandement.

Anon the Damsel arrayed her for to run with him. And at the last they run together, and within short space the Damsel got far before him. When the Jugler saw this, he threw forth his Garland of flowers before her And when the Damsel beheld and saw it, she stooped down and took it up, and set it upon her head, and that while the Jugler went before her. But when the young Damsel saw this, she wept sore, and for sorrow she threw the Garland into a ditch, and ran after him, and at last she overtook him, and lift up her right hand, and gave him a buffet, saying: Abide thou wretch, it becometh not thy Fathers son to have me to wife. And then this Lady did over-run him, and went before him a great space. And when the Jugler saw this, he took the Girdle out of his bosom, and threw it before her. And when she saw that, she stooped down and took it up, and girded her therewith and the while the Jugler gat before her again. Now when she saw that, she was wexed, and took the Girdle, and with her teeth tare it in three and then threw it from her: then she ran fast after him: and at the last overtook him, and then she gave him a great blow, saying: O wretch, thinkest thou to overcome me:

and

and with that she ran before him again. The Jugler was slie and strtille, and kept the Purse till they were nær the mark, and then he threw it before her, and anon she stooped down and took it up, and opened it, and took out the Ball, and read the Posey: who playeth with me shall never be weary of my play; And she began to play, and continued so long in playing, till that the Jugler was before her at the mark. And thus he won the Emperors Daughter.

The Moral.

Dear Friends this Emperor is our Saviour Jesus Christ, and his fair Daughter is the Soul of Man, which was made clean by the efficacie of Baptism, and was also swift in running, that is in vertue, while she was in her cleanes, so that no deadly sin might overcome her. This Jugler that is so subtil and crafty, is the Devil, which studieth day and night to deceive innocents. He provided him of three things. First, of the Garland, which betokeneth Pride: for why? a Garland of flowees is not set upon the arm, nor upon the foot, but upon the head that it may be seen: so Pride would be seen. Wherefore S. Augustine saith: when thou seest a proud man be not afraid to call him the son of the Devil; Do thou therefore as the Maiden did, be angry at thy sins, and cast off the

Garland of Pride, into the ditch of Repentance, and so shalt thou give the Devil a buffet, and overcome him. But when this Jugler, that is, our ghostly enemy the Devil, seeth himself overcome in one sin, then he returneth and tempteth a man in another sin: and casteth before man the Girdle of Lechery And alas, there be many girded with this girdle of Lechery: against which Girdle speaketh S. Gregory, saying: Gird we our loins with the Girdle of Chastity, for whosoever is girt with this Girdle shall not lose the hope of life. Then casteth the Jugler (that is the Devil) the Purse with the Ball. The Purse that is open above and close under, betokens the heart, which evermore should be close in the bottom against earthly things, and open above to heavenly joy: and the two strings that open and shut the Purse, betoken the love of God, and of our neighbours: the Ball which is round and movable, to every part of his difference, betokeneth covetousness, which moveth ever both in young and old, and therefore the Posey was true that was written on the Ball. Who so playeth with me, that is with Covetousness, shall never be satisfied. Therefore saith Seneca: When all sins wax old, then Covetousness waxeth young. Therefore let us take heed that we play not with this Ball of Covetousness,

toulnes, and then without doubt we shall obtain through the merit of Christ, the bliss of Heaven that never shall end. Unto the which bring us that shed his precious for us.

The Argument.

The Preaching of Gods Word and every good Prayer is a sweet sounding melody in the Ears of God, and hath a promised reward of God, yet there is now and then stirred up in us some let thereof by our whistling Adversary the Devil, and we are hindred for a time until by the providence of God godly Preachers be sent forth, which with the hook of Gods Word do win again our lost felicity, and so recover the fall of such souls as were seduced and led away, into joyfull and perpetuall fellowship of the blessed Angels of Heaven.

The seventeenth History.

Sometime dwelt in Rome a Noble Emperor and a wise, named Theodosius, which loved greatly the Musick of the Harp, and likewise the pastime of Hunting. It befel upon a day as this Emperor hunted in the Forrest, he heard a sweet noise of a Harp, so that through the sweetness thereof he was almost ravished of his wits, wherefore he sought about the Forrest to find that melody, and at the last he espied at the end of the Forrest a poor man sitting beside the water playing on a Harp full sweetly. Then said the Emperor: Good friend, proceedeth this melody from thy Harp or no? The poor man answered & said: My reverend Lord, I shall tell you the truth.

Here

Here beside this water, my Wife, my Child, and I have dwelt this thirty years, and God hath given me such a gift, that when I play on my Harp, I make such melode, that the fishes of this water come out to my hand, so that therewith my Wife, my Child, and I have been sustained in great plenty. But alass, sometime on the other side of this water there cometh a Whistler, and he whistleth so sweetly, that many times the fishes forsake me and go to him: therefore my reverend Lord I crave your help against this Whistler. Then said the Emperor, I shal give thee good help, I have here in my purse a golden Hook, which I will give thee, take it, and bind it fast to the end of a Rod, and put a Worm upon the Hook, then cast thy rod into the water, and play upon the Harp, and when thou perceivest the fish to bite on the Wait, draw them up to the Land with that Hook, and then this whistling shall not avail. When the poor man heard this he rejoyced greatly, and did as he had taught him. And when this poor man began to play upon his Harp, the fishes came to the bait, and then he took them up with his hook. and lived thereby in better estate long time, and at last ended his life in peace and rest.

The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperor betokeneth our

ur Lord Jesus Christ, which greatly delighteth to hunt the soul of mankind in the Forrest that is the holy Church. He loveth also the melody of the Harp, that is, he loveth much them that teach the holy Word of God. This poor man that sate by the waters side, betokeneth the Prelates of the Church, and the Preachers of ỹ word of God, which ought alway to be resident in their Charge, and not in the world, that is, they should not set their delight on worldly things. The Preachers ought to have the Harp of holy Scripture, wherewith they may praise and honor God, and also therewith draw out of this world sinners. Therefore saith the Psalmist thus, Praise the Lord upon the Harp, sing to the Lord with a Psalm of thanksgiving: Psal. 98. 6. But now adays the Preacher may say, Alas: for when I preach and teach the holy Scripture, the Devil cometh and whistleth so sweetly, that the sinners draw to him, and will not hear the word of God: but they turn themselves onely to the delight of sin. The Devil deceiveth mankind by divers ways.

First in the time of Preaching he maketh some to sleep, and them that he cannot make to sleep he causeth them to talk & clatter: and them that he cannot make to clatter, he maketh them so dull that they cannot understand

ſtand what the Preacher ſaith: and then that he cannot beguile by theſe means, he putteth into them buſineſs, and cauſeth them to go out of the Church. Behold how many ways the Devil hath to deceive mankind, and to hinder the Word of God. Therefore every Prelate, and every Preacher ought to have the golden book of Gods Word againſt this whiſtling, by which they may draw ſinners out of this world up to Heaven. Unto the which bring us our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, Amen.

The Argument.

Mans ſoul the Daughter of our Saviour, is right dear unto him, and though he be careful for the conforming of her in the ſtate of ſincere life, yet ſhe is ſeduced by the ſuggeſtion of the fleſh, which being a grievous tranſgreſſor, is yet by earneſt repentance and amendment of life, brought by the ſoul unto dutiful obedience towards God and man, that thence forwards continuing they together may be partaker of everlaſting bleſſedneſs,

The eighteenth Hiſtory.

THere dwelt ſometime in Rome a mighty Emperor named Ptolomeus, which had but one Child, a Daughter, whom he loved ſo much, that day and night ſhe was guarded with armed Knights: and over thoſe Knights he ordained a Controuler to inſtruct them how they ſhould do. He ordained alſo a Steward for to guide his houſhold. And when all this was done, on a night as he lay in his bed,

hed, he resolved that he would go visit the holy Land. And when all things were ready for his journey according to his desire, he called unto him his Steward and said: My trusty servant, I purpose now to go see the holy Land, and therefore I commit my Daughter to thy keeping, and charge thee that she lack nothing, but that she have all manner of joy that appertaineth to such a Virgin. Moreover I leave to thy keeping five Knights that be her Guard, and I charge thee that they lack nothing that is fitting for them. Also I leave with thee my Gray-hound, commanding that thou nourish and feed him as hitherto he hath been: and if thou fulfill all this that I have said, thou shalt at my coming again receive a great reward. Then said the Steward: My Lord, in all that I may I will fulfil your command. Anon the Emperor took his journey toward the City of Jerusalem, and the Steward a long time kept well the Emperors command and the charge given him

But at the last it befell upon a day, that this Steward had espied this young Lady walking alone in the Orchard, with whose love he was suddainly surprised; wherefore straightway, against her will he defloured her; and when he had committed sin with her, he gave her ill language, and hated her more than ever he loved her before, & drave her

out

out of the Palace: wherefore the Damsel by this meanes being driven to necessity and great poverty, went from door to door and begged her bread. But when the Knights that were her keepers saw this, they reproved shamefully the Steward of this inhumane deed. Then the Steward waxed wrath, and for great hate that he had in his heart, he spoiled the Knights of their goods, and drove them from the Palace, And when they were thus robbed and exiled, some for lack of living became theives and some men killers, so that through this inconveniency they wrought great harm.

Not long after there came tidings that the Emperor was arrived in that Land coming homeward, And when the Steward heard this, he was greatly troubled and moved in himself, and said: It cannot be but I shall be accused for my trespass that I have committed against the Emperors commandment, and he hath ever been my good merciful Lord, therefore better it were, that I go and meet him with all lowliness and humility; and accuse my self unto him, and ask him mercy, than that any other should prevent me, and accuse me to my Lord for treason. Then the Steward straight put off his cloaths, save his hosen & his shirt, and took three Ropes with him in his right hand, and bare-foot went and

met

met the Emperor. Now when the Emperor had espied him coming a far off in such manner he wondered greatly. And when the Steward was come so neer that he might speak to the Emperor, he fell down on his knees and saluted him reverently, Then said the Emperor, what is befallen thee, that thou meetest me after such a sort? for in that thou art my Steward, thou shouldest have met me with a great company of Noble Knights, Oh my Lord, quoth he, there is a heavy chance befallen me, for which it behoves me to meet your Highness thus. Then said the Emperor what chance is befallen thee? My Reverend Lord, quoth he, it behooves you first to ask me why I bring with me these three ropes. Then said the Emperor, why bearest thou these three ropes in thy hand? Then answered the Steward, and said: This first rope I bring with me to binde my hands and feet so hard, till the blood burst out on either side, for that I have well deserved: the second Rope I bring with me, to draw me at the Horse tail upon the pavement, till my bones be bare without flesh, for that it is but due to me for the great Treason I have done against you. The third Rope I have brought is to hang me with, upon an high Gallows, so long till that the Birds light on my Head, and on my Body, feed themselves

on

on my flesh, for these things are due to such Trespassers & breakers of the Law as I am. Yet Oh my Reverend Lord, have mercy on me, for I dare not acknowledge my trespass, untill I have obtained your pardon. Then said the Emperor, I see in thee great contrition, therefore tell me thy trespass, and surely thou shalt find Mercy and Grace. Alas, alas, then said the Steward, I have defiled thine only Daughter, and have driven her out of the Palace, so that now in great necessity she beggeth from door to door, I have also dispoiled thy Knights of all their goods, and now some of them in regard they lack living, become theeves and robbers, and some men-killers, and the Controuler of the Knights I have slain, but I fed thy Gray-hound with the best meat as long as I might, and tied him with a chain, yet at the last he brake his chain and went his way, so that now he runneth about the Country.

When the Emperor heard this, he was sore astonished, and said: Hast thou deflowred my Daughter, whom I loved so well, and also dispoiled my Knights, and slain their Controuler; and the Gray-hound, which I loved so well, of whom I gave thee charge, is he gone also? Surely were it not that I had forgiven thee, and that thou hast humbled thy self so much, I would have put thee to

the

the vilest Death that could be thought: notwithstanding depart hence forth with, and bring again my Daughter, that thou maist marry her, and if any harm hereafter befall to her, through thy default, then will I double thy punishment. Also bring again my Knights and restore to them their goods, and set them in their State & Offices as they were before. Also seek diligently for my Grayhound till thou find him, and make him fast, so that hereafter in thee there may be no fault found. Now when the Steward heard this, he bowed down with most humble submission, and thanked the Emperor for his great mercy, and then he went forth, and sought diligently through all the Empire, untill he found the Emperors Daughter, and the Knights, and the Grayhound, and brought them home again. And after he had married the young Lady, and restored again the Knights goods, he ended his life in peace.

The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperor betokeneth our Lord Jesus Christ. His Daughter betokeneth the Soul of Man, made after the similitude of our Lord God. The five Knights are 5 five wits armed with the vertue of Baptism for the preservation of the Soul. The Controuler of the Knights is Reason, which ought to rule the wits. The gray-hound is the flesh of man:

and the Steward is every man, to whom God hath given a life and soul to keep under pain of losing everlasting life. But wretched and wicked man, not remembering what is to come, full often corrupteth and polluteth his Soul with sin, and repelleth her from her Palace of Heaven, & then wandreth she from door to door, that is, from sin to sin. He dispoileth these five Knights of their goods, that is the five Wits, or rather gracious Vertues, taking away the natural light from their eyes, giving them bad counsel, also moving their ears to listen unto slander & backbiting, and so forth of all the other Wits thus some be made theeves. and some man-killers. The Master of these five Wits is slain whensoever man is ruled by Will, and not by Reason. The Grayhound, that is the Flesh, wherein a man delighteth, was fed and bound with a Chain of Reason, but breaking out; full oft doth much harm.

The coming again of this Emperor from the holy Land, betokens the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ at the day of Doom to judge all Mankind. Wherefore let us, as ỳ Steward did, accuse our selves of our sins first, lest the Devil and the World accuse us, then it is too late to ask mercy: therefore put we off our cloaths betime, that is, our sinful Life, and take we three Ropes in our hands. The first

Rope

Rope that should binde our hands and feet, betokeneth the Rope of true repentance, which not only ought to binde our hands and feet, but also our heart within us, and our outward conversations, in such austerity of life, that sin might void it self. Hereto accordeth Ezekiel saying thus: Whensoever the sinful man doth repent himself he shall be forgiven. The second Rope for to draw the trespasser, is acknowledging of our sins, which would draw us from ỳ beginning of our life, unto our lives end, by a perfect reconciliation of our selves to God and man, unto the time that the flesh was fallen to the bones that is, till the lust of the flesh be turned away by the stones of repentance. For even as the stone be Nature is hard, right so the way of repentance ought to be hard. The third Rope, that should hang the Felon, is the rope of amendment of life: for it is written in Holy Scripture, There is more joy in Heaven over one Sinner that turneth unto the Lord in time, than over ninety and nine Just Persons,

Like as the Steward brought again the Emperors Daughter, so it behoveth us to seek about by a fruitful Faith, untill we find again our lost Soul, and to bring her again to the Church, to rule well our five Wits, to feed our Grayhound we should, and make

our life so clean and pure, that we fall not again to sin, for fear that it fortune to us worse, and that we have no leisure to ask mercy again at our needs; and if we fulfill all this truely unto our lives end, without doubt we shall obtain everlasting life. To the which our Lord bring us all. Amen.

The Argument.

The violating of our innocency in not imitating the Law of God, here described, which being adjudged after the Law, is death, but by the merits of Christ our Saviour we obtain salvation.

The nineteenth History.

IN Rome dwelt sometime a mighty Emperor and a wise named Ensenne, who ordained a Law, that whosoever ravished a Virgin, should be at her discretion, whether she would put him to death, or would take him to her Husband.

It befell after that a man ravished one night two fair Maidens: the first Damsel which he ravished desired that he should die, but the second desired him to her Husband. The Ravisher was taken and led before the Judge, that he might satisfie both these Damsels according to equity of the cause. The first Damsel desired his death according to the law; Then said the second, I desire to have him my Husband: and like as thou hast the Law for thee, so in like case I have for me, and also my petition is much better then yours,

for

for it is more charitable: therefore me thinks in my reason, that the Judge should give sentence to the favour & furtherance of my desire When the Judge heard the mercy of the second Damsel, he gave Judgment that he should take her to Wife, and so it was done.

The Moral.

Dear Friends this Emperor betokeneth our Lord Jesus Christ, The ravisher betokeneth every sinner, which ravisheth the holy Commandments of God by sin, for the Devil can never overcome Man, except he be suffered by the will: For Saint Augustine saith, It is not sin except it be voluntary. The ravisher also is called before the Justice, when the Soul is departed from the Body: and anon the first Damsel (Innocency) laid against the Sinner, that he ought to die everlastingly by the law of Righteousness: But the other Maid (that is, Christs merits) alledged for him, how the mercy of God ought to help by hearty Repentance, and acknowledging of sins, which is the high way to everlasting life. Unto the which God bring us all. Amen.

The Argument.

The Mother and the Child of Grace and of the Reprobate is here declared, and set forth: but which of them shall be saved, and which of them shall be damned, is not yet revealed to the World, until the last and dreadful day of judgement.

The twentieth History.

SOmtimes, there dwelt in Rome a mighty Emperor, and a rich, named Lypodus, which took to Wife a fair Virgin & a gentle the Daughter of the King of Assyria. This young Lady conceived and bear him a Son, and in the birth she died: not long after her decease the Emperor married another Wife and had by her a Son: and immediately after the second Child was born, he sent them both into a Strange Land, there to be brought up. Now when the Children had been there long, the Empress said: My reverend Lord, ten years be now fully expired since I bear my Son, and yet I never saw him but once, and that was the first day of his birth, therefore I beseech you my Lord, to to send for him, to the end that I may once rejoyce me in his sight. Then said the Emperor, I have another child by my first Wife, and if I send for thy Son, then must I send for them both: notwithstanding, at the Empresses request he sent for them both. And when they were come, they were of passing feature & well trained up, & so passing like in all things that hardly the one might be known from the other, but the Father knew the difference.

Then said the Mother of the second Child: My Lord, I pray you tell me which of these is my Son. Then the Emperor called to him that

that Son that he begat on his first Wife. When the Empress heard this, she gave all care to nourish him, and neglected the other Child. Now when the Emperor saw this, he said: Truly I deceived thee: Without doubt this is not thy Son, but one of them two is thy Son. Then said the Mother, My Lord, I most earnestly entreat you, that you would tell me without dissembling, which of them is my Son. The Emperor answered and said, certainly I will not tell you, untill they be both come to mans estate, and this is my reason: First, I told you that this was your Son, and you cherished him, and forsook that other: and when I told you that this was your Son, then thou slightly regarded the first, and cherished the second. Therefore my desire is, that thou cherish them both alike, that I may have like joy of them When the Empress heard this, she cherished them both alike. And when they were both at age, the Emperor made a great feast, and before all his Nobles he told his wife openly which was her Son. Then rejoyced the Empress greatly, and when she had lived a good time, she ended her life in peace and rest.

The Moral.

Dear Friends this Emperors Sons betokeneth those that be chosen to everlasting life, And those that be not chosen. The

Mother of them is ỳ Providence of God that nourisheth them both: therefore our Lord will not that his Providence should let the world know which be chosen, and which be not chosen: For if she knew that, then would she love the one and hate the other, and so Charity among us would be overthrown, and we should live in discord and strife: but Truth at the day of Judgement shall tell to us which of them shall be saved, and which of them shall be damned. Therefore pray we in this World, that we may come to the everlasting feast in Heaven. Unto the which God bring us all.

The Argument.

The ungodly of this World will not take any pains to live vertuously, and yet oftentimes they are enriched for the most part with the riches of Fortune, but they are not careful of the reward laid up for the righteous in Heaven, neither do they fear the torments of Hell appointed for the Reprobates.

The one and twentieth History

Sometime there dwelt in Rome a Noble Emperor, named Polinus, which had three Sons whom he loved much. It befell upon a day, when this Emperor lay upon his bed, he bethought him to which of his Sons he might give his Empire after his decease. Then called he to him his three Sons, and said: which of you is most sloathfull, he shall have mine

mine Empire after my decease. The first Son answered and said: the Empire by reason would be mine, for I am so sloathfull, that if my foot were in the fire, I had rather it should be burnt, then I would take it out. Then said the second, I am (quoth he) more fit for the Empire than thou, for though there were a cord about my neck wherewith I should be hanged, and if I had a sharp sword in my hand, for very sloth I would not once put forth my hand to cut the cord to save my life. And when these two Brethren had thus said, then the third spake for himself thus: I ought to be Emperor before you both, for I exceed you in sloth, and I will prove it thus: I lie up right in my bed, and there dropeth water upon mine eys, and for very sloth I will not move my head: neither to the right side of the bed, nor to the left, to save my self. When the Emperor heard this, he bequeathed his Empire unto the youngest, as to the sloathfullest of the brethren.

The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperor betokeneth the Devil, which is the Lord and Father over the ungodly in this world. By the first Son is understood, a man that chanceth into evil company, by which he falleth into misdemeanour, and had rather be burnt in the fire of sin than depart from them. The

second

second Son betokeneth him that knows himself to be fast bound with the band of sin, wherewith he is to be hanged on the gallows of Hell, and is so slothful, that he will not cut it away with the sword of Repentance. By the third Son is understood a Man that hears of the joys of Heaven, and the pains of Hell, yet will not move himself to the right nor to the left side to forsake his sins for fear of eternal pain: such a man without doubt, for his sloth shall receive the Kingdom of Hell From which keep us our Lord Jesus. Amen.

The Argument.

Mans Soul as a Captain General, with his forces of armed Vertues fight against a strong City, the World, wherein in the Castle of Vanity, and in that are poysoned forces of sin, as mortal enemies of mankind, against whom well to fight is the means to obtain the victory and triumph everlastingly

The two and twentieth History.

ALexander the mighty Emperor sometime ruled, who besieged a city of the King of Egypt with a great Hoast, nevertheless, this Emperor lost many worthy Knights without any hurt or stroke. And thus from day to day his people died suddenly, whereat this Alexander wondred greatly, and was sorrowful therefore in his mind, he called unto him his wisest Philosophers that might be found, and demanded of them why his People

died

thus suddenly without any wounds? The Philosophers answered and said: My Lord, it is no wonder, for upon the walls of that Castle within the City is a Cockatrice, through whose sight your men die, for they are infected with a venom that cometh from her eys, and thereupon they die.

Then this Alexander asked if there were any remedy against the Cockatrice. The Philosophers answered, and said: My Lord, there is good remedy for if it please you to set up a large Mirrour of clear glass over against the Cockatrice, between your Host and Wal of the City, when the Cockatrice beholdeth her selfe in ỳ Mirrour, the deadly Nature of the venemous sight shall return again to her self, and thus she shall die, and your men shall thereby be saved. Then the Emperor did as the Philosophers counselled him, and set up forthwith a large Mirrour of excellent clear glass, and thus was the Cockatrice slain, and the Emperor with his Hoast made an assault on the City, and obtained the victory.

The Moral.

Dear Friends this Emperor may be called every Christian man, which ought to gather an Hoast of virtue for without vertue no man can fight spiritually. The City against which ye shall fight, is the World, wherein

wherein there is an high Castle, that is, Vanity of Vanities, and all is but vanity. In this Vanity standeth the Cockatrice, that is, pride of life; desire of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, wherefore this pride infecteth so many, that they die in sin everlastingly: wherefore the best remedy against this pride, is the consideration of our uncleanes, how we came naked into the world. And if it be asked why a man is proud, it may be answered thus, for default of cloathing himself with vertues: what shall we do when we die thus ghostly, but set up a pure mirrour of conscience that by that conscience we may consider our slidings, and our brittleness, as in a glass, where we may see our default? And if we do thus, without doubt the Cockatrice, that is Pride of life, desire of the eyes, and lust of the flesh, shall be utterly destroyed, and we shall obtain the victory of this worldly City, and by Christs merits win everlasting life. Unto the which he bring us all, Amen.

The Argument.

The soul of man being conversant in the Body with the flesh, she seeketh by sinister means to overthrow the Soul with her unclean lusts after the World, where though the Soul for a time suffereth shipwrack of worldly felicity, yet the Lion of the Tribe of Juda is of power, not only to comfort her in necessity, and to make her to repossess her former estate in the World to come.

The

The 23. History.

A Mighty Emperor sometime ruled the Romans, named Archelaus, who in his old age espoused a fair Lady, whom a young knight loved, and had to do with her as oft as him list. It befell on a night, that this Emperor he thought him in his Bed, to visit the City of Jerusalem, where without any more delay he ordained all things necessary for his journy, and taking his leave of the Empress, and of the States of the Empire, went towards the said City.

When the Empress heard this, she took the Master of the Ship aside, and said: If thou wilt consent to me, and be true, ask of me what thou wilt, and thou shalt be sure to have it. The Master of the Ship was corrupt with covetousness, and said: O my dear Lady, whatsoever thou command me, I will without fail fulfill it, so that thou wilt reward me for my labour. Then said the Empress, before thou doest ought for me, I will give thee what ever thou desirest, so that thou wilt swear to be true to me, and keep my counsel. Then the Master of the Ship swear to be true to her.

Then said the Empress, My Lord goeth with you in your ship, therefore when he is in the midst of the Sea, cast him over-board, that he may be drowned, and thou shalt have what

thou

thou wilt for thy reward. Then the Master of the ship swear a great Oath, and said: By the great God Jupiter, after he cometh once within my Ship, you shall never see him more. Then the Lady gave him as much gold as he would have, and he went to his ship.

And within short time after the Emperor took Shipping, and when it was in midst of the Sea, the Master of the Ship took the Emperor and threw him over board into the Sea. When the Master returned again, he told the Empress how he cast the Emperor into the Sea, whereof she was right glad.

This Emperor that was cast into the Sea, had learned in his youth to swim, and swam to a Iland in the Sea, and when he was faint, and like to be drowned, he prayed to God to be his help. At length he came into a little Iland, wherein was nothing but Lions and Leopards, and such other beasts as swam thither from other Lands. When the Emperor had got to land in that Ile, he espied a young Lion fighting with an old Leopard, and the Lion was too weak, and was almost overcome. Now the Emperor had great compassion on the Lion, and drew out his Sword, and forth with slew the Leopard. The Lion from that time forth followed the Emperor, and would not leave him for any thing, but ever

every day ỳ preythat the Lion took, he brought and laid at the Emperors feet, and the Emperor smote fire with a flint stone, and broiled the body of the Beasts in the skin: and thus was he fed by a long season. At length, as he walked by the Sea shore, he saw a goodly Ship come sailing by, with a high voice he cried. And when the Ship-men heard the voice, they wondred what it might be, wherefore they sailed toward him: and when they were come neer him, he said: Good friends take me with you, and I shall pay you a good fraught. So they took him into their Ship, and the Lion followed him, swiming in the Sea after the Ship: and when the Lion was neer drowned, the Ship-men had pitty on him, and took him into the Ship. Now when the Emperor came to land, he payed his fraught, and went forth with the Lion till he come neer his own Pallace where he heard Trumpets, and all other Musick, and as he marvelled what it might be, there came from the Pallace a Squire toward him that he knew, but the Squire knew him not: To whom the Emperor said thus: Good friend, I pray thee tell me what is the cause of this melody. The Squire answered and said, the Empress is married this day, and all the States of the Empire are at the Feast, and therefore they make such melody. Then

said

said the Emperor to the Squire: where is her husband, that was the Emperor before? The Squire said, that he went to the Holy Land, and was drowned by the way. Then the Emperor said: Sir, I pray you tell the Empress and the Lord that shall be her Husband, that (I to please them) will shew their Majesties rare sport with my Lion. The Squire granted to do his errand, and went in and told his Lord and Lady that a goodly old man was at the gate, that would shew them sport with his Lion; Then said the new married Lady, bring him in, he perchance may deserve meat for his play. When the Emperor with his young Lion was brought in, the Lion without any setting on, ran upon the young Knight that was newly married, and slew him, and when he had so done, he ran upon the Empress also, and devoured her to the bones, before all the Lords of the Empire. And when the Nobles saw this, they were greatly agast, and began to flee. But the Emperor with his fair speech perswaded them, and said, Lo, this is the vengeance of God, for this my Wife hath used Adultery long time with this Knight that lieth dead, and she practiced my death with the Master of the ship, and thereupon he threw me into the Sea, but God saved me from death; and because I helpt once this

Lion

Lion at a need, he neber forsook me since, and now, as ye all see, when I came into the Palace, without provoking of me he hath slain both the Adulterers, and therefore understand ye for truth, that I am your Emperor. Now when they heard this, they looked more seriously upon him, and discerned him to be their Emperor, and greatly rejoycing, praised God for that miracle, which had saved their Lord and Emperor. And they lived together a long time in Peace.

The Moral.

Dear Friends, by this Emperor we may understand every Christian Man that purposeth to visit the City of Jerusalem, that is, to get everlasting life, through faith. But his wife, that is, the wretched flesh, murmureth against the soul, and loveth better an Adulterer, that is deadly sin, than her husband. This Emperor went into a ship, taking his journey towards the City of Jerusalem, that is, he went to the Church of God, which is the way to God: but the Wife, that is, fleshly men, accused him to the Master of the ship, that, is to the Prelates of the Church, for great Reward, which oftentimes do blind the sight of many Justices, whereby many perfect men be cast out of the ship into the sea to be drowned, that is, out of the Church into the sea of this World. But what shall we do then

that is thus caſt to be troubled in this World certainly, this ought he to do: let him learn to ſwim, that is, let him put all his hope in God, and by his grace he ſhall come to an Iſland, that is the Religion of Heart, and then he ſhall love ever the better to keep himſelf out of this World, and therefore S. James ſaith, A pure Religion and undefiled before God even the Father is this, &c. And he that is in this Religion ſhall find a Lion, whome he behoveth to have againſt the Devil. This Lion is our Lord Jeſus Chriſt that came of the Tribe of Juda, who fighteth ever againſt the Devil, and if a man hath holpe this Lion, that is, hath ſerved God againſt his enemies at any time, he may truſt well that he will not forſake him at his need, according to the Pſalmiſt, ſaying: I am with him in trouble. By this Lion thou muſt tame thy wife, that is thy fleſh with repentance, and ſlay thy ſin, and then without doubt thou ſhalt obtain the Empire of Heaven. Unto the which bring us all our Lord Jeſus, Amen.

The Argument.

The Soul of man eſpouſed to Chriſt in Baptiſm, yet dieth by means of ſin, leaving behind her Son called Reaſon, or rather the Word of God, which ſearcheth the diſeaſe of man, her ſinful Father; and being ſent for to cure the Malady of his ſtep-mothers will, he refuſeth to adminiſter ghoſtly comfort unto her.

The 24. ſtory.

SOmtime there dwelt in Rome a Noble Emperor, named Gregory, who married a vertuous and beautiful Lady to his wife. This young Lady in due proceſs of time conceived and bare a Son, a fair and an amiable child. When this child was ten dayes old, his mother the Empreſs died: Not long after the Emperor married another Wife: The ſecond Wife could not affect or love by any means the Emperors Son, but did him all the ſhame and reproach that ſhe might, When the Emperor perceived this, willing to pleaſe his Wife, he exiled his Son out of his Empire. And when the Son was exiled, he went and ſtudied Phyſick, ſo that within a ſhort time he was a skilfull & cunning Phyſitian. It befell not long after, that the Emperor his Father ſickned, and was almoſt at deaths dore, wherefore when he heard that his Son was ſo good a Phyſitian, he ſent for him by letters, praying him that he would come to him without delay. Now the Son willing to obey his Fathers commandement, in all haſt came to him, and when he had felt his pulſes, he diſcerned the ſickneſs, and miniſtred phyſick to him, whereby he ſhortly recovered.

Not long after, the Empereſs his ſtepmother began to fall ſick, and many Phyſiti-

ans said she would die. And when the Emperor heard this, he sent to his Son to help her of her sickness. Then said his Son, Certainly Father I will lay no hand on her, Then the Emperor began to wax wroth, and said: If thou wilt not obey my Commandement, thou shalt hence forth depart my Empire. His Son answered and said, if thou do so (dear Father) you do unrightly, for well you know, that you exiled me of your Empire through her suggestion, and my absence was the cause of your sickness, now my presence is cause of her sickness, therefore I will not medle with her, nor use any physick unto her, for oftentimes Physitians are deceived in their Patients, therefore I dare lay no hand on her, for if it should fortune her to die, men would judge that my Physick were the cause thereof.

Then said the Emperor: she hath the very same sickness that I had. His Son answered and said: Though she have the same sickness, nevertheless you are not both of one constitution: for whatsoever I did to you, you were therewith content, and when you saw me come within the Palace, you rejoyced at my coming and was greatly pleased with the sight of me that you begat: but when this my step-mother saw me, she was angry, and took coole at her heart, and therefore if I should but speak to her, her sorrow would much

more

more encreaſe, and if I ſhould offer to touch her, ſhe would be in a rage. Alſo a Phyſitian profiteth little except the patient take pleaſure in him: Now none can cure her of enby. And when he had ſpoken his mind, he took his leabe and departed thence.

The Moral.

Dear friends this Emperor betokeneth every Chriſtian man, which is married to Chriſt in the Baptiſm of regeneration, for then the Soul is made the ſpouſe of Chriſt, on whom our Sabiour begetteth a Son, that is, the knowledge of his Word and Will. But when the child grew up to ſome ten years of age, or ſome increaſe in vertue, his mother Chriſtianity died: then vertue departed from youth, and afterwards the Chriſtian man his Father matcheth himſelf with another woman, the ſtep-mother of the ſaid youth, named ignorant Envy, which in no wiſe could affect the Emperors Son of knowledge, wherefore ſhe cauſed him to be baniſhed into a ſtrange Country, from his Father and her both. It hapned that the good Chriſtian man, being ober ruled by his Wife, falleth ſick, and ſendeth for his Son, that is, knowledge of Gods Word and will, to cure him as his Phyſitian, who dutifully performeth the ſame, But his ſtep-mother falling ſick at the ſight of the Emperors Son, though the

Christian man her Husband labours to him to cure her, as a good Physitian of her Soul, yet she not liking his good endeabour to win her from her ignorant enby of the Truth, is very hardly healed of her sickness, but oftentimes dieth in her ignorant enby and wilful wickedness without any hope of health or life unto eternal salbation, so that Physitian comes hither to late.

The Argument.

Jesus Christ the Son of God ought to be cherished and fostered in our hearts by faith & good life: which is taken from us when we are not thankful unto him for his graces. Wherefore the Preachers of Gods word, as good Physitians, are sent nnto us, for to admonish and warn us to persevere in amendment of life and constant hope in Christs merits, and so to harbour him in our hearts, he may thereby bestow on us the promotion of heavenly bliss.

The 25 History.

SOmetimes there dwelt in Rome a mighty Emperor named Folenus, who took to wife the Kings Daughter of Germany, a fair Lady and courteous, which within short time conceibed and bear a Son. When the Child was born, the States of the Empire came to the Emperor, and every one besought the Emperor to have the bringing up of his Son. The Emperor answered, and said: To morrow shall be a Turney, and there

there you shall all be, and whichof you doth well, and obtaineth the victory, he shall have the keeping of my Son: and if he train him up well, I shall promote him to great dignity and honour, and if he do the contrary he shall die the foulest death that can be thought. Then said they: Most reverend Lord, all this pleaseth us well. On the morrow, when every man was come to the Turney, the States justed valiantly: but at length came a valiant Knight named Josias, who so couragiously bare himself there, that he obtained the victory: and immediately after the Turney was all done, this Josias took the Child, and led him home with him. And because the Emperors Son should be received with state in his Countrie, he sent before to his Castle, and commanded his Officers that they should royally provide for him, and that the Childs Lodging should be in the midst of the Castle, and also that the seven Sciences should be pourtrayed about the Childs Bed, that when the Child waketh out of his sleep, he might lie in his Bed, and behold the same. The Knight had a wholesome Well by the Childs bed side, wherein he used to bath himself and the Knights Wife bare the key of the Well, and there was a Windows whereat the Sun might comfortably shine upon him. It fortuned upon a day, that the Lady left

open the Windowe through negligence, which being done, thither came a Bear, and seeing the Windowe open, went to the Well, and bathed him therein, of whose bathing the Well laboured after, through the great heat which was at that time in the hunted Bear, whereby whosoever drank of that water waxed leprous within short time after. So it fortuned that the Lord and the Lady, with all the household, by drinking of the water of that Well became Lepers, notwithstanding it appeared not presently. Not long after it fortuned there came a great Eagle in at the Windowe where the Emperors Son lay, and bare the Child away out of the Cradle. Now when the Lord of the Castle heard this, he wept bitterly and said: Alas, alas, wo is me wretched creature, that ever I was born, what shall I do? now I am the Son of death, for I am become a loathsome Leper, and so is my Wife with all my Houshold, also the Emperors Son is lost and gone.

Now while he thus mourned, there came to him a Physitian, and said: Sir, if you will do after my counsel, you shall not repent you; First it behoveth you, your Wife, and all your Houshold to be let blood, and after that to be bathed and clean washed, and then I will apply to you my medicine: and when you are whole then shall you and your Houshold walk

up

up to the mountains, and seek the Emperors Son, for the Eagle hath let it fall there in some place. Then the Lord followed the advice and counsel thus given him by the Physitian, and forthwith he and all his Household were let blood, and received the medicine, and within a short time after were all whole and sound. When they were thus healed, he took his Horse, accompanied with three men, and rode forth to seek the Child, & at last he found him whole and sound lying in a valley, whereat he greatly rejoyced. And incontinently with great joy and gladness he led the Child home to the Emperor his Father. Now when the Emperor saw his Son in good health, he was right glad, and promoted him to great honour. And so after that he had long time lived there in noble state, he after ended his life in peace and rest.

The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperor betokeneth the Father of Heaven, his Son betokeneth our Lord Jesus Christ, to nourish whom many men desire, at such time as they received the Sacrament of his death & passion. He nourisheth him best that justeth with ꝑ Devil, and overcometh him by godly life. This Knight that took his Child with him betokeneth a good Christian man, that evermore abstaineth truely from doing evil, and laboureth continually

ally to do good to all men. Therefore do we as the Knight did, send messengers before to prepare & make clean the Castle of our hearts, from all spots of sin, by lively Faith, and so shall this Child Jesus rest in the midst of our hearts.

The Well betokeneth Mercy, which ought to be next our Lord, for whoeber is without mercy and truth may not nourish the blessed Child Jesus: but it hapned oft, that the Knights Wife, that is the flesh of Man, beareth the key of Mercy, and oft leaveth that Well open, and then comes the Bear, that is the Devil, and leaveth his loathsome filth in the Well of mercy, and whoso tasteth thereof, shall be infected with the leprosie of sin. The window wherein the Sun shined is the grace of the Holy Ghost, by whom men are comforted ghostly. By this window the Eagle cometh in, that is the flying affections of the wicked World, carrying away the knowledge of God from us, unto the vale of ignorance and security, and thou man hath great cause to weep, but what shall we do when the Child is gone, but send for a skilfull Physitian, that is a discreet Minister of the Word of God, which shall gibe him counsel to let him blood, and all his Houshold that is to put out sin through acknowledging thereof, and reconciling himself with earnest repentance, unto his Heavenly Father. Then

Then must he bathe himself with tears of contrition and compunction of heart, and after that, take the medicine of amendment of life, and so live pure and clean from all manner of sin, and when he had done thus, he must leap on the Palfrey of good perseverance from evil, and ride forth with the three men, that is, falling from evil, Praying to God, and well deserving towards men, and then without doubt he shall find the Child Jesus in the valley of humilitie, not on a Hill, that is Pride. And if he do this, doubtless he shall have might and power to nourish that blessed Child Jesus, for whose nourishing the Father of Heaven shall promote him unto everlasting joy. Unto the which joy he bring us, that shed his precious blood for us. Amen.

The Argument.

Christ the giver of everlasting glory hath proclaimed a like joy and bliss in Heaven, as well to the poor as to the rich. But the rich oftentimes covering all, looseth the prerogative which the poor in heart enjoy by the providence of God, Yet as he is a righteous God, he ordaineth both for the rich and poor in such sort, that if they will they may together joyfully be satisfied with the great plenty of his abundant graces.

The 26. History.

SOmetime there dwelt in Rome a mighty Emperor, named Fulgentius, which governed his people nobly, and loved them so much,

much, that he made a proclamation through out all Nations: that whosoever would come to him, rich or poor, at a certain day, should have their petition, whatsoever it were. When the mighty men heard this, they were glad, and came at the day assigned, and every man put forth his petition unto the Emperor, immediately their petitions were granted and fulfilled, insomuch that a great part of the Revenues of the Empire was distributed among them. Then every man was joyfull, and went home again, and took possession of such Lands and Castles as the Emperor had given them.

Straightway after, the poor men in the Emperors Dominions, gathered them together, and said, a common cry was made that whosoever came to the Emperors Palace should have whatsoever he asked. The rich men have been there lately, and obtained their petitions: therefore go we now, and try if we may obtain any good of the Emperor. Now this Counsel liked them all, wherefore they went to the Emperors Pallace, and there they put forth their petitions according to the Proclamation.

When the Emperor had heard them, he said to them: Dear Friends, I have heard all your petitions, and it is true that my Proclamation was, that every man indifferently,

should

should come and have their petitions, but the rich have been here before you, to whom I have given all that I had, save only the royalty of my Lordship, and so have nothing left to give you. Whereto the poor men sadly replied, Most gracious Soveraign have compassion on us, & let us not go away empty, for we know well it is our own default that we came not rather with these other rich and mighty men: but stil it is so, we crave your grace, that we may obtain somewhat by the which we may live. Then said the Emperor; Good friends, though I have given most of my Lands, Rents, Tenements and Castles to the rich men that came before you, nevertheless, I have kept still in my own hands the soveraignty and dominion ober them, and that I do give to you, and so they shall be your servants, and be obedient to you all. And when ỳ poor men heard this, they greatly thereat rejoyced, and kneeled down to the Emperor and thanked him, saying, Lo though we be com late, yet we be Lords ober all these other. And with this they took their leave and went home again. But when the rich and mighty men heard that, they were greatly moved; and ordained a common Parliament among themselves. And thus it was spoken among them: Alas, alas, how may we serve them that sometime were but peasants, and our

subjects

subject in all manner of things: and now they be made Lords over us. Therefore go we all with one assent to the Emperor, & pray him for redress. When this was said, they forthwith went to the Emperor, and said to him, Reverend Lord, what may this mean, those that were our servants even while, be now our Lords? we beseech your Highness that it may not be so.

Then said the Emperor: My good friends, I do you no wrong, for my Proclamation was common, that whatsoever you asked of me you should have your petition, & you asked only of me Lands and Honours, and all those I have granted you to your own desires, insomuch that I kept nothing for my self, and you were well content at your going hence. Now after that came the simple and poor men, and asked of me some boon according to my Proclamation, and I had nothing to give them but only the soveraignty and dominion over you, which I kept in my hands: and when the poor men cried so to me, I gave them the authority over you, yet I see not that you can blame me therefore: for I gave you all the wealth which I had. Then said they: O dear and gracious Lord, we pray you let us have you help & advise in that so dangerous a case.

The Emperor answered and said: Sirs, if you will follow my advise, I shall give ye good and profitable counsel. Then

Then they said: We be ready to fulfill whatsoever you advise us for our profit.

Then said the Emperor: My loving Friends, you have received of me both Lands and Tenements, and also great plenty of honours & preferments; the which by my counsel you shall impart to the poor men, that they may grant unto you the Soveraignty, and that dominion which they have. When the mighty men heard this they willingly condescended to impart their goods among the poor men, and they as willingly gave them again the authority over them, like as they had of the rich men. And thus were they both contented, and the Emperor was greatly commended of the people, because he so well contented both parties.

The Moral.

Dear Friends, by this Emperor is understood our Lord Jesus Christ, which made a Proclamation by his Prophets, Patriarks, Apostles, and Preachers, that every man both poor and rich, should come and ask everlasting joy, and without doubt they shal obtain their petitions; But the rich and mighty men ask for no other thing, but worldly honour & transitory riches, yet this world shall pass, and all the covetousness thereof: wherefore he gave them so much of worldly wealth, that he had nothing for himself, according to the Scriptures: The

Birds

Birds of Heaven have neſts & the Foxes of the earth have caves, but the Son of man hath nothing in the earth where he may put his head Mat. 8. 20. The poor men be ꝑ meek in heart of whom the Lord ſpeaketh, ſaying: Bleſſed be the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven, Mat. 5. 20. Son it ſhall ſeem that they habe ſoberaignty in Heaben abobe the mighty men of the world, therefore theſe rich men ought to impart of their temporall riches to the poor men according to the Scripture: Make you friends with riches of iniquity, that when ye ſhall want, they may receive you into everlaſting habitation, Luk. 16. 9. And according to Tob. 4. 9. Give alms of thy ſubſtance: if thou haſt but a little, be not afraid to give a little alms. And thus ye may attain unto the Kingdom of Heaben. Unto the which I beſeech Almighty God bring us all.

The Argument.

The Emperor of glory, Chriſt Jeſus, hath two daughters, the one fair the other foul, the fair daughter is the world, and the pleaſures thereof, the foul is poverty and trouble: The fair daughter is deſired of many, the foul of few, for he that loveth the world regardeth only the vanities thereof, but he that loveth God will ſuffer all perſecution and trouble for the obtaining of him.

The 27 Hiſtory.

IN Rome ſometime dwelt a noble Emperor, named Domitian: which had two Daughters

ters, the one of them was passing fair, but the other foul and ill favoured: Wherefore he proclaimed throughout all his Empire, That who so would take his fair Daughter to Wife, should have no other thing with her, but her beautifull and comely personage; but who so would marry his foul Daughter, should have all his Empire after his decease. Now when this Proclamation was made, there came many Lords that desired to marry his fair Daughter: to whom the Emperor answered thus; Sirs, ye wot not what ye desire; for, if ye marry her, ye shall have nothing with her, but her beautifull and comely personage: and furthermore, if I give her to one of you rather then to another, you will grudge; therefore, if ye will needs have her, and forsake my foul Daughter, you shall Just for her, and he that winneth her shall marry her.

Then the Nobles and States of the Empire greatly rejoiced; and for the love of that beautifull Damsel they would not onely Just, but fight also. So they set a day of battel, and many worthy men were slain on both sides; nevertheless, one obtained the victory, and espoused that fair Lady.

The second Daughter, which was foul and ill-favoured, seeing her Sister so bestowed with great solemnity, wept daily: therefore the Emperor her Father came to her, & said, Dear

Daughter, why mourneſt thou thus? Alas dear Father, quoth ſhe, it is no wonder though I mourn, ſeeing my ſiſter is married with great honour and gladneſs, and every man is joyful of her, and no man careth for my company, therefore, dear Father, what I ſhall do I know not. Then ſaid the Emperor: O my dear Daughter, all that is mine is thine, and it is not unknown to thee, that he which married thy ſiſter had nothing with her but her beautiful corps: and therefore I ſhall proclaim in mine own perſon through mine Empire, that what man will marry thee, I ſhall aſſure him the Empire after my deceaſe by Letters patent. Then this young Lady, t ough ſhe was foul and ill-faboured, neverthleſs ſhe rejoyced greatly in the promiſe of her father Shortly after the Proclamation was thus made, there came a proper and young Knight which eſpouſed the Lady, and after the death of the Emperor, he ſeized upon all the Empire and he was crowned Emperor, and ſhe Empreſs: and after that they had lived together a long time in peace and reſt.

The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperor betokeneth our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which had two Daughters, the one fair, and the other foul: The fair Daughter betokeneth ỹ world, which is full fair, and delectable to many men. The

foul

foul betokeneth poberty and trouble, whom few men desire to marry with. Nevertheless a proclamation was made by the holy Scripture, that who so would have his fair Daughter, that is, the World, should have nothing with her but her fairness, that is, the worldly vanities, which fade and fall away like as the beauty of man: but who so will marry the foul Daughter, that is, will voluntarily receive poberty and trouble for Gods love, without doubt he shall obtain the Empire of Heaben, according to the Scripture, saying: Ye that have forsaken all things for my love, to follow me, shall have everlasting life.

Many Noble and worthy men have Justed for the fair Daughter, that is, have sought and travelled by Sea and by Land in this world, for covetousness of worldly riches, and at length there be many slain: for there is nothing here but Pride of life, Covetousness of the eyes, and of the flesh, where through these grievous sins all the world is put to great damage and mischief: So he that married the fair Daughter, that is the World, is he that setteth all his affections and whole desire upon the wretchedness and vanities of this wicked World, and will not by any means forsake this vain world, like a wretch. But he that marrieth the foul Daughter, that is, the good Christian man, which for the love of the King-

dom of Heaven, and the everlaſting joys thereof, forſaketh all this world; and not onely doth thus, but alſo deſpiſeth himſelf, obeying the true and everlaſting God in all things; Such a man certainly ſhall obtain the joyfull and happy Empire of Heaven: Unto the which bring us our Lord Jeſus. Amen.

The Argument.

Devotion, Prayer and thankſgiving unto God for his gifts, is a ſweet ſounding Muſick, delectable in the ears of God: We are hereby warned; after our firſt offending, not to return to our vomit with the Dog; nor after waſhing, with the Sow, to wallow in the mire: No, rather let us bathe our ſelves in ſorrowfull and hearty repentance, in perſeverance in good life, that we may live with Chriſt in everlaſting joy and bliſs.

The 18. Hiſtory.

IN Rome ſometime dwelt a mighty Emperor named Andromicha, the which above all things loved Muſick. This Emperor had within his Palace a Well of ſuch vertue, that whoſoever were drunk, by drinking the water thereof, ſhould incontinently become freſh again, and be delibered from all kind of dizzineſs. There was alſo dwelling in the Emperors Court a Knight, named Ydrony, whom the Emperor loved much, but oft times he would be drunk, which vice the Emperor hated above all things. And when this Knight perceived himſelf drunk,

then

then would he go to the Well and drink of that water and refresh himself, so that whatsoever the Emperor said to him he would answer him so reasonably, that no drunkenness might be seen in him, and for his witty answers he was greatly beloved of the Emperor Nevertheless his fellows sought to draw the Emperors love from him.

It fortuned on a day, that this Emperor went to the Forrest, where he heard a Nightingale sing right pleasantly: oftentimes after he would rise early in the morning, and sometime from his meat, and walk into the Wood to hear her sweet Song, wherefore many of his Men said among themselves: our Lord delighteth so much in ꝑ Nightingals song, that he reckoneth nothing our profit, insomuch that through two things his love is withdrawn from us, that is, Ydrony the Knight, and by the sweet song of the Nightingale. Then said an old Knight that was among them: Sirs, quoth he, if you will follow my counsel, I shall deliver you of the Knight Ydrony, & also the Nightingale, without hurt or death. Then they answered, and said, what soever you advise us to do we shall straight way fulfill it with all our hearts When this Knight heard this, within a while after he chanced to espie this Knight Ydrony drunk, wherefore he locked fast the Well, so

when this Knight Ydrony came to refresh himself he found the Well fast locked.

Now the Emperor had a great business to treat of, wherefore in haste he sent for this Knight, because of his great wisdom, to have his counsel. And when he came before the Emperor he was so drunk that he could not move his tongue, neither had wit, nor reason, nor understanding to answer the Emperor to his matter.

But when the Emperor saw this, he was greatly vexed, for as much as he hated that vice: wherefore he commanded anon, that from that day forward he should be seen no more within his Land upon pain of death.

This hearing, his foes they rejoyced, and said unto the old Knight: Now we be delivered of this Knight Ydrony, there is no more to do, but that we may find a way to be delivered also of the Nightingale, in which the Emperor delighteth so much.

Then said the old Knight, Your ears shall hear, and your eyes shall see this Nightingale shall be destroyed shortly.

Not long after, this old Knight espied that the Nightingale used to sit upon a tree even above the aforesaid Well, whereas her mate came and coupled with her, nevertheless in the absence of her Mate, she took oftentimes another

another Mate and coupled with him: When she had thus done, then would she descend to the Well to bathe her self, that when her Mate came he should feel no ill savour or scent of that she had done. When the Knight had seen this, on a time he locked the Well, and when the Nightingale would have descended to bathe her selfe, after coupling with the other Mate, she found the Well closed: wherefore she flew up into the Tree again, and mourned sore in her manner, and left her Song. Then came her Mate and saw that she had done against her nature, he returned again, and in short time brought a great Multitude of Nightingals, which slew his Mate, and tare her all in pieces.

The Moral.

Dear Friends this Emperor betokeneth our Lord Jesus Christ, which loveth greatly the Song of Devotion, for when we pray we speak unto God, and when we read God speaketh unto us. The Well that was in ỹ Palace betokeneth acknowledging of our sins to God. Therefore if any be drunk with sin, let him drink of the Well of acknowledging of his sins and without doubt he shall be safe.

This Ydrony betokeneth every man that wilfully returneth again to sin after his acknowledging sin, like as the Dog, that maketh a vomit, and casteth up the meat that he

ath eaten before, and afterward, when he is hungry, cometh and eateth it again. Nevertheless, if a man that hath thus sinned will drink of the Well of acknowledging his sin, he shall receive his Ghostly strength.

The Nightingale that sat on the tree, betokens the Soul that sitteth on the Tree of holy Doctrine. And her Song betokeneth the Soul that sitteth on the Tree of devout Prayers to God. But this Soul doth commit evil as oft as she consenteth to sin. Nevertheless, if she run to the Well of acknowledging of sin, and bathe her with the Water of contrition, God shall love her.

But her Foes, that is, the Fiends of Hell, seeing this, that God is merciful, they stop the Well of acknowledgment of sin, that is they would withdraw us from dutiful acknowledgment, and from due reconciliation of our selves between us and God, and between us and man, without shame and dread of repentance, not to declare our sins. And thus, through the temptation of the Devil our Adversary, many have been exiled, and put to death everlastingly. And therefore study we to bathe our Souls in this life in the Well of acknowledgment of sin, with the Water of contrition, and then we shall be sure in the world to come to have joy everlastingly. Unto the which God bring us all. Amen.

The

The Argument.

The Soul of every good Christian man ought to prepare armed vertues for to withstand the assaults of the Devil. We are here put in mind of our deliverance from death, by the precious blood shed of Jesus Christ: which is a terror to all the Devils in hell, if we continue in faith, and believe in him, the bulwark of our salvation.

The 29. History.

SOmetime there dwelt in Rome, a mighty Emperor named Hermes, which had a mighty strong City, exceeding strongly walled about, and a Bell hanging in the midst of the said City; and whensoever the Emperor went to any battel without the City, this Bell was ever rung; but there did no man ring the Bell, but a Virgin. Within short time after, it befel that Dragons, Serpents, and also many other venomous Beasts, impoisoned much people, so that the City was almost destroyed: Wherefore the States of the City went with one accord to the Emperor, and said; Lord, what shall we do? Lo, our people, our goods, and our City is almost destroyed, and you and we be in peril to perish, through these cruel Beasts that consume us; therefore take we good counsel, or else we are undone. Then said the Emperor, What think you is best to be done in this matter? and how may we be best defended? Then answered one of the Wisest, and said; My

Lord,

Lord, hear my counsel, and do thereafter, and you shall not repent it: You have in your Palace a Lion, set up a piece of timber for the purpose, and thereunto let the Lion be nailed and made fast, and when other venemous Beasts see him thus used, they will be afraid, and forsake our City, and we shall be in safety Then said the Emperor, it pleaseth me well that he be so used, thereby to save you. Then they took the Lion and used him in like manner as aforesaid, which when the other Beasts saw, fled away for fear, and never more afterwards durst they come thither.

The Moral.

Dear friends this Emperor betokeneeth the Father of Heaven, the City well walled, with a Bell in the midst, betokeneth the Soul walled about with vertues. The Bell betokeneth a clean Conscience that warneth a man to Battel, when he should fight against the Devil, that he might arm himself before with vertues. The Virgin that should always ring this Bell is Reason, which is a Virgin inclineth to all rightfull cleanness. The venomous Dragon that beareth the fire betokeneth the flesh of man, which beareth the fire of Covetousness, which burnt Adam our forefather, when he eat of the forbidden Apple. The venomous Beasts that poysoned the men betokeneth the fiends of Hell, which for the most

most part have destroyed all mankind. The States of the City betokeneth the Patriarks and Prophets, which besought God of counsel and remedy, that mankind might be saved, & anon it was counselled for the best remedy, that a Lion (that is Christ) should be nailed upon the Cross, according to the Scripture saying thus It was requisite that one man should die for the people, lest all flesh should perish. Then took they Christ, and hung him on the Cross, for the which the Devil dreadeth Christian people, and dares not come nigh them. And thus by the grace of God, Christian men shall come to everlasting bliss. Unto the which bring us the Lamb of God, which shed his precious blood for us. Amen.

The Argument,

Here is signified the thraldom of man unto Satan by sin, till Christ the Son of God descended, with the power of the Holy Ghost, to set him at liberty, and put him in possession of the Palace of everlasting felicity.

The 30. History.

THere dwelt sometime in Rome a mighty Emperor and a merciful, named Menelay, who ordained such a Law, that what innocent person was taken and put in prison, if he might escape and come to the Emperors Palace, he would be there safe from all manner of accusations against him in his life time. It was not long after, but it befel, that

that a Knight was accused, wherefore he was taken and put in a strong and dark Prison, where he lay a long time, and had no light but a little window whereat scant light shone in, that lighted him to eat such simple meat as was brought him by his keeper: wherefore he mourned greatly, and made sorrow that he was thus fast shut up from the sight of men. Nevertheless when ỳ keeper was gone, there came daily a Nightingale in at the window, and sung full sweetly, by whose Song this woful Knight was oftentimes fed with joy, and when the Bird left off singing, then would she flie into the Knights bosom, and there this Knight fed her many a day of the victual that God sent him. It befel after upon a day, that the Knight was greatly desolate of comfort. Nevertheless the Bird that sate in his bosome fed upon kernels of Nuts, and thus he said to the Bird: Sweet Bird, I have sustained thee many a day, what wilt thou give me now in my desolation to comfort me? remember thy self well, how that thou art the creature of God, and so am I also, and therefore help me now in this my great need.

When the Bird heard this she flew forth from his bosome, and tarried from him three days, but the third day she came again, and brought in her mouth a precious stone, and laid

laid it in the Knights bosome. And when she had so done, she took her flight, and flew from him again. The Knight marvelled at the stone, and at the Bird, and forthwith he took the stone in his hand, and touched his Gives and Fetters therewith, and presently they fell off. And then he arose and touched the doors of the Prison, and they opened, and he escaped, and ran fast to the Emperors Palace. When the Keeper of the Prison perceived this, he blew his Horn thrice, and raised up all the folk of the City, and led them forth, crying with an high voice, Lo, the Thief is gone, follow we him all. And with that he ran before all his fellows towards the Knight: And when he came nigh him, the Knight bent his Bowe, and shot an Arrow, wherewith he smote the Keeper in the Lungs, and slew him, and then ran to the Palace, where he found succour against the Law.

The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperor betokeneth our Lord Jesus Christ, who ordained a Law, that what Innocent, that is, what Person imprisoned wrongfully, might escape, and come to his Palace in his heavenly habitation through Repentance and true amendment of life, should finde perpetual succour and help.

This

This Knight betokeneth every one that is innocent, and accused by envy or malice unjustly, taking grief for his present estate.

The keeper of this Prison betokeneth the Devil, that keepeth such a Man hard bound by sin, and serveth him with riches and delights of this transitory world, that he should not escape from danger.

The Bird that singeth so sweetly betokeneth the voice of Heaven, that saith to the oppressed, Turn again, now turn again, thou prisoner, that is, turn again thou oppressed, and I will receive thee to Grace. for when Mankind was in thraldom to Satan in the Prison of Hell, then came there a Bird, that is, the God-head, bearing with him a Stone that betokens our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the holy Scripture, saying: I am a Stone.

The Soul of Christ descended with the God-head, and brought with him all Mankind out of the Prison of Hell, therefore if any of us be in the Prison of worldly oppression, touch we our sins with the stone, that is, with the vertue of the Lord Jesus Christ, by acknowledging our sin in faithful prayer, and by true contrition, and then without doubt, the chains of our oppression, with the Stone, shall be broken, and fall from us, and the door of heavenly Grace shall be opened, and we

shall obtain help and succour in the Palace of the heavenly habitation.

And if the Keeper of the prison, ỳ is the Devil (which is the blower of the horn of Pride, Lechery or Covetousness) stir in us any uns, then turn me towards him manfully, and shoot at him the arrow of constant Faith in Jesus Christ, by true and unfeigned Repentance, and without doubt he shall flie from us: and then by the grace of God, we may obtain the Palace of Heavenly bliss, where we shall behold the King of all glory. Unto the which bring us our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

The Argument.

A poor man exalted to dignity, is here admonished not to be unthankful, and to render evil for good but even to the most simple ones to be gratefull for any benefit, else surely God that gives thee this promotion. will make the brutish creatures of the earth thy enemies, and depose thee from thy dignity; and he that hath helped thee; be he never so base, may in the end have better favour with God and man than thy self, wherefore be warned of ingratitude by this example, and know thy self, thy God, and friend.

The 31 Historie.

SOmtime time there dwelt in Rome a might Emperor, named Ebolides. It fortuned on a day, that this Emperor walked into a great Forrest to take his pleasure, where he met suddenly with a poor man, and so soon as the Emperor saw him, he was greatly mo-

ved with

with mercy, and said: Good friend, whence art thou: My soveraign Lord, quoth he, I am your subject born in your Land, and am now in great poverty. Then said the Emperor: If I knew that thou wert true in every thing, I would promote thee to great riches, therefore tell me what is thy name.

My Lord, quoth he, I am called Lentulus, and I promise you to do you true service, and if I do otherwise, I submit my self unto all manner of punishment that you can put me to; When the Emperor heard that, he promoted him incontinently to great riches, and shortly after he made him a Knight, and the Steward of his Land. And when he was thus exalted to honor, he waxed very proud, in so much that he despised both his superiors and inferiors: Not long after this Steward rode by a great Forrest, where met with the Forrester, and charged him that he should make an hundred pits in the ground, and cover them over with green grass and small boughs, that if wild beasts fortuned to go to the Forrest that way, they might fall in, and so being taken, be brought to the Emperor. The Forrester answered and said: Sir, as you have said it shall be done. Not long after it fortuned, that this Steward rode to the Forrest again to see if these pits were made, and as he rode he bethought himself how wealthy a man, and how

how mighty in power he was made, and how most men in the Empire obeyed him, and were at his command. As he rode thus thinking, he said to himself: There is no man greater then I, and with that he smote his Horse with his spurs, and suddenly he fell into one of the deep pits, that he himself had ordained before for the wild beasts, and for the great deepness thereof he could not rise again by any manner of means, wherefore he he languished in great perplexity: and straight way after him came a fierce Lion, and fell into the same pit, and after the Lion, an Ape and after the Ape a Serpent. When the Steward was thus beset with these Beasts. he was exceedingly afraid.

Then at that time was dwelling in the City a poor man named Guy, that had no riches save only an Ass, whereon daily he carried sticks and wood that fell from Trees, and such as he could get in the Forrest, and those he brought to the Market and sold them: and in this wise sustained himself and his wife as long as he might.

It fortuned that this poor Guy went to the Forrest as he was wont, and as he came by the deep pit, he heard a man cry and say, O dear friend, what art thou: for Gods sake help me, and I shall recompence thee so well that thou shalt ever after be the better, When

this poor Guy heard that it was the voice of a man, he marvelled greatly, and stood still on the pits brink, and said: Lo, good friend, I am come, why hast thou called me? Then said the Knight, Dear friend, I am Steward of all the Emperors Land, and thus by fortune I am fallen into the pit, and here be with me three Beasts, that is, a Lion, an Ape, and an horrible Serpent, which I fear most of all, and, I wote not of which of them I shall be deboured: therefore I pray thee get a long Rope, wherewith thou maist draw me out of this deep pit, and I will make thee rich for ever hereafter: for if I have not help the rather, I shall be deboured of these cruel Beasts.

Then said this poor Guy, I may full ill at this time intend to help thee, for I have nothing to live on, but that I gather wood, and carry it to the Market to sell, wherewith I am sustained. Nevertheless I will leave my purposed labour, and fulfil thy will, and if thou reward me not, it will be great hinderance to me, and to my poor wife. Then the Steward made a great Oath, and said, I will promote thee and thine to great wealth. Then said Guy, if you will perform your promise, I shall do what you command me. And with that he went again to the City, and bought there a long Rope, and came to

pit again, and said: Sir Steward, loe here I let down a Rope to thée, bind thy self about the middle therewith, that I may pull thee up. Then was the Steward glad, and said: Good friend let down the Rope: and with that he cast the end of the Rope down into the pit; and when the Lion saw it, he caught the Rope and held fast, and Guy drew up the Lion, weening in himself he had drawn up the Steward, and when he had so done, the Lion thanked in his manner, and ran to the wood. The second time that Guy let down the Rope the Ape lept to it, and caught it fast, and when he was drawn up, he thanked Guy in his manner, and ran to the wood. The third time he let down the Rope, he drew up the Serpent, which thanked him, and went to the wood. Then the Steward cried with a loud voice: O dear friend, now I am delivered of these three ravenous Beasts, let down the Rope to me, that I may come up. Then this poor Guy let down the Rope, and the Steward bound himself fast about the middle, and Guy drew him up. And when he was thus holp out of the pit, he said to Guy, as followeth,

Come to me to morrow to the Palace, and then I will reward thee. Then poor Guy rejoyced thereat, and went home without reward. Then his Wife demanded of him if he gat'ered no wood whereby they might

live that day. Then told he her of the event as it befel, how the Steward fell into the Pit (and also the Lion, the Ape, and the Serpent that he had made in the Forrest,) & now he had holpen him out with a Rope, and saved him from being deboured of the three venomous Beasts: and that he should go to the Steward, and fetch his reward on the morrow. When his Wife heard this she rejoyced greatly, and said: If it shall be so, pray you rise to morrow at a due hour and go to the Palace, and receive your reward, that we may be comforted thereby.

So in the morning Guy arose, and went to the Palace, and knocked at the Gate: then came the Porter, and asked the cause of his knocking. I pray thee quoth this Guy, go to the Steward, say to him, That here abideth a poor man at the Gate that spake with him yesterday in the Forrest. The Porter went and told the Steward as the poor man had said. Then said the Steward: Go you again and tell him, That he lyeth, for yesterday spake I with no man in the Forrest, and charge him that he go away and trouble me no more. The Porter went forth and told poor Guy what the Steward had said, and charged him to go his way. Then was this poor Guy sorrowfull, and went home, he told his wife how the Steward answered him. His Wife comfor-

ted him in all the might, and said, Go you again and prove him thrice.

Then on the morrow this Guy arose, and went to the Palace again, praying the Porter to do his Errand once again to the Steward. The Porter answered and said, Gladly would I do thy Errand, but I fear me sore it will be to thy hurt. Then went he in and told the Steward That this poor man was again returned, when the Steward heard that, he went out, and all to beat poor Guy, and left him in peril of death.

When his Wife heard this, she came with her Ass, and led him home as she might, and all that she had she spent upon Surgeons and Physitians to help him: and when he was perfectly whole, he went to the Forrest as he was wont for to gather sticks and small Wood for his living. And as he went in the Forrest, he saw a Lion driving before him ten Asses that were laden with rich Jewels and Merchandise. This Lion drove forth the Asses before Guy, which feared him sore, lest he should have devoured him, nevertheless when he beheld the Lion better, he knew well that it was the same Lion that he drew out of the pit. This Lion left not Guy till all the Asses with the merchandise were entered into his yard, and then the Lion did him obeysance, and ran to the wood.

Then Guy searched the fardels and found great riches therein, wherefore he made Proclamation in divers Churches, if any man had lost such goods, he should have them again, but there was none that challenged them. And when Guy saw this, he sold the goods, and bought therewith House and Land, and so was made rich. Nevertheless he went to the Forrest, as he did before. And as he was in the Forrest gathering wood, he spied the Ape on the top of a tree, breaking boughs lustily with her teeth and claws, and throwing them down, so that in short time Guy had loaded his Ass. And when he had so done, she went her way, and Guy went home.

Now Guy on the morrow went to the Forrest again, and as he sat binding his faggots, he saw the Serpent that he drew out of the pit come towards him, bearing in her mouth a precious stone of three colours, which she let fall at Guy's feet, and when she had thus done, she kissed his foot and went her way. Then Guy took up the Stone, and marvelled greatly of what vertue it might be; wherefore he rose up and went to a Jeweller named Peter, and said: Dear brother, I pray thee tell me the vertue of this precious Stone, and I shall reward thee for thy labour. When this Jeweller had well beheld and understood the nature of the Stone, he said: Good friend, if thou list to sell

sell the Stone, I shall give the an hundred marks for it. Then said Guy, I will not sell the Stone, till thou tell me truly the vertues thereof. Then said the Jeweller, without doubt this Stone hath three vertues: the first vertue is, that whosoever beareth this Stone about him, shall have joy without sorrow: the second vertue is, that he shall have plenty without want: the third vertue is, that he shall have light without darkness, and it hath also another vertue, that no man may sell it, but for as much as it is worth, and if he do the contrary, the Stone returneth again to the first owner. When Guy heard this, he was right joyful, and said to himself, in a good hour I drew these Beasts out of the pit.

Not long after it befel, that this Guy was made passing rich, and bought great possessions and livings, wherefore within a while he was made a Knight.

It was not long after, but the Emperor had knowledge how Sir Guy had a Stone of such vertue; Wherefore he sent for Sir Guy, commanding him to come in all haste, and so he did. And when Sir Guy was come to the Emperor, the Emperor said to him: My friend, I have heard say, that sometime thou wert in great poverty, and now thou art made rich by the vertue of a little stone, therefore I pray thee that thou sell me that stone. Sir Guy

answered and said, that may I not do, for so long as I have that Stone, I am sure of three things, that is of joy without sorrow, plenty without want, and light without darkness.

When the Emperor heard this, he had a greater desire to buy the Stone then he had before, and said to him: Sir Guy, of two things thou must choose one, that is, whether thou wilt forsake this Empire, and all thy kindred, or else sell me the stone. Then said Sir Guy: My Lord if it must needs be thus, be it at your will. Nevertheless I shall tell you the property of this stone, if you pay not for it as it is worth, without doubt it will come to me again. Then the Emperor said, surely I will give sufficient, for thou shalt receive of me therefore a thousand pound, and so it was done. Sir Guy received the money and went home.

On the morrow early he opened the Coffer, and found the stone, and then he told to the Lady his Wife, how he had found in his Coffer the stone which he had sold to the Emperor. Then said his wife, Good Sir, haste you unto the Emperor again, and give him the stone, lest he be displeased, and through malice repute some deceit in us.

Then went Sir Guy again to the Emperor, and said to him: My Lord, yesterday I sold you a stone, which if it please you, I would

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fain see. The Emperor went for his stone to the Treasury, but found it not, wherefore he was right sorrowful, and came again and told Sir Guy how it was lost, then said Sir Guy: My Lord, grieve you not, for I told you yesterday, that I might not sell it except I had the value thereof, and yesterday I received a thousand pound of you therefore, and this day I found it in my Coffer again, and therefore if I had not brought the stone again peradventure you would have shewed me your heavy countenance, and with that he shewed forth the stone, whereat the Emperor marvelled greatly, and said Sir Guy, by the faith that thou owest to me, tell me how thou camest by this stone.

Then said Sir Guy, by the faith that I ow to you, I shall tell you the very truth as touching the stone.

Your Steward that is so promoted up of nought, caused many deep pits to be made in your Forrest, and it fortuned that he not long after fell into one of them himself, & through the deepness thereof could not rise again. It chanced also the same day, that a Lion, an Ape, and a Serpent fell into the pit with him, at which time I was a very poor man & took great pains for my living, and as I walked into the Forest with mine Ass to gather wood he cryed to me to help him out of the Pit, and save

save him from death, for there were in the Pit with him three venomous beasts, that is a Lion, an Ape, and a foul Serpent, and then he promised me by his word, to promote me and all my kindred to great riches: which when I heard, I was right glad, and let down a Rope unto him, supposing to have drawn him up, and haled up a Lion, and after that an Ape, and after a Serpent, and at the last your Steward.

The Lion gave me ten Asses laden with Merchandise, the Ape gave me as much wood as mine Ass would bear, and the Serpent gave me this Stone that I have told you; but your Steward beat me, and wounded me so sore for my good will, that I was born home upon mine Ass.

When the Emperor heard this, his heart was moved greatly against the Steward, wherefore he examined him of that false deed: but he was dumb, and would not speak, for so much that he could not deny his ingratitude.

Then said the Emperor, O thou wretched creature, unreasonable Beasts, as the Lion, the Ape, and the Serpent, rewarded him for his good deed, and thou that art a reasonable man hast almost beaten him to death that saved thee, & took thee out of the pit, therefore for thy falshood & wickedness I judge the to be hang-

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ed this day on the Gallows, and all thy Goods and Lands I grant to Sir Guy, and also I ordain that Sir Guy shall occupy thy place, and be my Steward: and so it was done.

When Sir Guy was thus rewarded by the Emperor and made Steward, he was well beloved of every man as long as he lived, and at the last ended his life with honor in peace.

The Moral.

This Emperor betokeneth the Father of Heaven, the poor man betokeneth every man that cometh into this world, and at last is promoted to great riches and worldly honour, as the Psalmist saith: God lifteth up the poor man out of the mire, But many such men neither know God nor themselves, but cause deep pits to be made, that is, unkindness and malice, they ordain against simple men, into the which pit the Devil oft causeth them to fall, according to the Text in Ecclesiasticus, who maketh a pit for an other man, himself falleth therein: which Text was proved by Haman, who caused a Gallows to be set up for Merdocheus, but was hanged thereon himself.

This Guy that went daily to the Forrest with his Ax to gather wood, betokeneth every just and godly man, fearing God in the Forrest of this world: his wood that he gathereth betokeneth his faith and good works, which he carrieth

carrieth upon his Ass, humane endeabour, whereby his soul may have joy, and live in the tabernacle of Heaven, and as the Steward, the Lion, the Ape, and the Serpent fell into the pit, right so a sinful man falleth into the pit of sin: But the Lion of the Tribe of Juda (that is Jesus Christ) descended with him as oftentimes as the sinner hath will to come to grace. Wherefore saith the Psalmist, I am with him in tribulation.

This Guy draweth up the Lion, that is mans Soul, out of the pit, by the cord of vertue he drew up the Ape also, that is, contrary will to reason, that he may obey to reason: for of all manner of Beasts, the Ape is most like to man, right as amongst all the strengths of the soul, discretion ought to be linked with reason, and to obey reason. He drew up also a Serpent, by which is to be understood repentance, for two causes: for as the Serpent beareth in his mouth venom, and in his tail a medicine: right so repentance beareth at the beginning bitterness to the doer, yet it is sweet and medicinable unto the Soul at the end, and therefore every justman should draw to him the Serpent of repentance. Then at the last he drew up the Steward from the pit of sin, according unto Christ saying, I am come not only to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Also it is written, that Seneca

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the Philosopher taught the Emperor many Laws and Vertues of truth, and at last as the Steward did, he sought the death of Seneca. Also Christ gave power to Judas to work miracles; as he did to the other Disciples, yet betrayed him at last: Right so, now adays many children of Belial delight more to do harm then good, specially to to them that would instruct them perfectly both for soul and body.

The Lion gave to the just and godly poor man ten Asses laden with Merchandise: that is, our Lord Jesus Christ gives unto every righteous man ten Commandements charged with vertues, by which he groweth to the riches of Heaven.

The Ape also gathereth him wood as oft as the just man worketh the works of faith: for wood necessarily is profitable for two uses, that is, to make fire, to build houses, Even so, Charity rejoyceth God and Angels in Heaven according to Scripture, More Joy is among Angels for one sinner that repenteth, &c. Charity also raiseth the house of Heaven against the coming of the soul.

The Serpent gave him also a Stone of three divers colours, which betokeneth our Lord Jesus Christ, whom we seek by Repentance. Therefore saith Saint Jerome in his second Table thus: we should repent us after our shipwrack.

That

That Chriſt is the Stone, may be proved by himſelf, ſaying: I am a living Stone; Chriſt hath three colours, which betokeneth the power of the Father, the wiſdom of the Son, and the humility of the holy Ghoſt: Therefore who ſo may get this precious Stone ſhall have the Empire of heaven, joy without ſorrow, plenty without want, and light without darkneſs. Unto the which bring us our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Amen.

The Argument.

By the Nativity of Chriſt proceedeth joyful gladneſs to the world, and ſalvation unto mankind; yet is man unthankful unto God, contrary to his promiſe made in Baptiſm. We are warned in all worldly tempeſts continually to cleave to Chriſt by Faith and Hope, to continue well doing, and to withſtand the malice of the Devil: the Preachers of Gods Word are ſent of God to confound the Devil by ſound Doctrine & good life. Life and death is ſet before men: we ought then to chuſe that life that may be for our everlaſting comfort.

The 32. Hiſtory,

SOmetime dwelt in Rome a mighty Emperor named Anſelm, who had married the Kings Daughter of Jeruſalem, a fair Lady and a gracious in the ſight of every man, but ſhe was long time with the Emperor ere ſhe bear him any child, wherefore the Nobles of the Empire were very ſorrowful, becauſe their Lord had no Heir of his own body begotten.

Till

till at last it befel, that this Anselm walked after supper, in an ebening, into his Garden, and bethought himself that he had no Heir, and how the King of Ampluy warred on him continually, for so much as he had no Son to make defence in his absence, therefore he was sorrowful, and went to his chamber and slept. Then he thought he saw a vision in his sleep, that the morning was more clear then it was wont to be, and that the Moon was much paler on the one side then on the other. And after he saw a Bird of two colours, and by that Bird stood two Beasts, which fed that little Bird with their heat. And after that came more Beasts, and bowing their breasts towards the Bird, went their way: Then came their divers Birds that sung sweetly and pleasantly; with that the Emperor awaked.

In the morning early this Anselm remembred his vision, and wondred much what it might signifie, wherefore he called to him his Philosophers, and also the States of the Empire and told them his dream, charging them to tell him the signification thereof, upon pain of death, and if they told him the true interpretation thereof, he promised them great reward. Then said they: Dear Lord, tell us your dream, and we shall declare to you what it betokens. Then the Emperor told them from the beginning to the ending, as it is afore-

said

said. When the Philosophers heard this, with glad chear they answered and said: Sir, the vision that you saw betokeneth good, for the Empire shall be clearer then it is.

The Moon that is more pale on the one side than on the other, betokeneth the Empress, that hath lost part of her colour, through the conception of a Son that she hath conceived. The little Bird betokeneth the Son that she shall bear. The two Beasts that led this Bird betokeneth the wise & rich men of the Empire which shall obey the Son, These other Beasts that bowed their Breasts to the Bird, betoken many other nations that shall do him homage. The bird that sang so sweetly to this little Bird, betokeneth the Romans, who shall rejoyce & sing because of his birth, This is the very interpretation of your dream.

When the Emperor heard this, he was right joyful. Soon after that, the Empress travelled in Child-birth, and was delivered of a fair Son, at whose birth there was great and wonderful joy made.

When the King of Ampluy heard this, he thought in himself, thus: Lo, I have warred against the Emperor all the days of my life and now he hath a Son, who when he cometh to full age, will revenge the wrong I have done against his Father, therefore it is better that I send to the Emperor, and beseech him of truce

truce and peace, that the Son may have nothing against me when he cometh to manhood: When he had thus said to himself, he wrote to the Emperor, beseeching him to have peace. When the Emperor saw that the K. of Ampluy wrote to him more for fear then for love, he wrote again to him, that if he would find good and sufficient sureties to keep ỳ peace, and bind himself all the days of his life to do him service & homage, & to give him yearly a certain tribute, he would receive him to peace.

When the King had read the tenor of the Emperors Letter, he called his counsel, praying them to give him counsel how he might best do, as touching this matter. Then said they, It is good that ye obey the Emperors will and commandement in all things. For first in that he desired of you surety for the Peace, to this we answer, thus; Ye have but one Daughter, and the Emperor one Son, wherefore let a Marriage be made between them, and that may be a perpetual Covenant of peace. Also he asketh homage and tribute, which it is good to fulfil. Then the K. sent his Messengers to the Emperor, saying, that he would fulfil his desire in all things, if it might please his Highness, that his Son and the Kings Daughter might be Married together, All this well pleased the Emperor, yet he sent again, saying, If his Daughter were

a clean birgin from her birth unto that day, he would conſent to that marriage. Then was the King right glad, for his Daughter was a clean Virgin.

Therefore when the Letters of Covenant and compact were ſealed, the King furniſhed a fair Ship, wherein he might ſend his Daughter, with many Noble Knights, Ladies, and great riches, unto the Emperor, for to have his Son in marriage.

And when they were ſailing in the ſea towards Rome, a ſtorm aroſe ſo extreamly and ſo horribly, that the Ship brake againſt a Rock, and they were all drowned, ſave only the young Lady, which fixt her hope and heart ſo greatly on God, that ſhe was ſaved, and adeut three of the clock the tempeſt ceaſed, and the Lady drove forth over the waves in that broken Ship which was caſt up again: but a huge Whale followed after ready to devour both the Ship and her. Wherefore this young Lady when night came ſmote fire with a ſtone wherewith the Ship was greatly lightned, and then the whale durſt not adventure toward the Ship for fear of the light. At the Cock crowing, this young Lady was ſo weary of the great Tempeſt and trouble of Sea, that ſhe ſlept, and within a little while after the fire ceaſed, and the Whale came and devoured the Virgin. And when ſhe awaked and found

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her self swallowed up in the Whales belly, she smote fire and with a knife wounded the Whale in many places, and when the Whale felt himself wounded, according to his nature he begun to swim to Land.

There was dwelling at that time in a Country near by, a noble Earl, named Pirris, who for his recreation walking on the Sea shore, saw the Whale coming towards the Land, wherefore turned home again, and gathered a great many of men and women, and came thither again and fought with the Whale, and wounded him very sore, and as they smote, the Maiden that was in his belly cryed with an high voice, and said: O gentle friends have mercy and compassion on me, for I am a King Daughter, and a true Virgin from the hour of my birth to this day. When the Earl heard this, he wondered greatly, and opened the side of the Whale found the young Lady, and took her out. And when she was thus delibered, she told him forthwith whose Daughter she was, and how she had lost all her goods in the Sea, and how she should have been married unto the Emperors Son. And when the Earl heard this, he was very glad, and comforted her the more, and kept her with him till she was well refreshed. And in the mean time he sent Messengers to the Emperor, letting him

to know how the Kings daughter was saved.

Then was the Emperor right glad of her safety and coming, and had great compassion on her, saying: Ah good maiden. For the love of my Son thou hast suffered much woe: nevertheless if thou be worthy to be his wife, soon shall I prove. And when he had thus said he caused three Vessels to be brought forth: the first was made of pure Gold, well beset with precious stones without, and within full of dead mens bones, and thereupon was engraven this Posey, Who so chuseth me, shall find that he serveth. The second Vessel was made of fine silver, filled with earth & worms, and the superscription was thus, who so chuseth me, shall find that his nature desireth. The third vessel was made of Lead full within of precious stones, and thereupon was insculpt this Posey: Who so chuseth me, shall find that God hath disposed for him. These three Vessels the Emperor shewed the Maiden and said, Lo here Daughter, these be rich Vessels, if thou chuse one of these wherein is profit to thee and to others, then shalt thou have my Son. And if thou chuse that wherein is no profit to thee, nor to any other, surely thou shalt not marry him.

When the Maiden heard this, she lift up her hands to God and said, Thou Lord, that knowest all things, grant me grace this hour so

so to chuse, that I may receibe the Emperors Son. And with that she beheld the first vessel of Gold which was engraben royally, and read the superscription: Who so chuseth me, shall find that he serveth, saying thus, though this Vessel be full pretious, and made of pure gold, neverthelesse I know not what is within, therefore my dear Lord this Vessel will I not chuse.

And then beheld she the second Vessel, that was of pure silber, and read the superscription: who so chuseth me, shall find that his nature desireth: Thinking thus within her self, if I chuse this Vessel, what is within I know not, but well I know there shall I find that nature desireth, and my nature desireth the lust of the flesh, and therefore this Vessel will I not chuse.

When she had sæn these two Vessels, and had given an answer as touching them, she beheld the third Vessel of lead, and read the superscription: who so chuseth me, shall find that God hath disposed: Thinking within her self this Vessel is not very rich, nor outwardly precious, yet the superscription saith: who so chuseth me, shall find that God hath disposed: and without doubt God neber disposeth any harm, therefore by the leabe of God this Vessel will I chuse.

When the Emperor heard this, he said: O

fair Maiden open thy vessel, for it is full of precious stones, and see if thou hast well chosen or no. And when this young Lady had opened it, she found it full of fine gold and precious stones, as the Emperor had told her before. Then said the Emperor, Daughter, because thou hast well chosen, thou shalt marry my Son. And then he appointed the wedding day, and they were married with great solemnity, and with much honour continued to their lives end.

The Moral.

This Emperor betokens the Father of Heaven, who was long time without a natural Son, therefore many men were in danger of perishing in Hell. The Empress conceived when the Angel Gabriel said: Lo thou shalt conceive and bear a Child. And then the Firmament began to clear when this little Child lightened the world with his birth. The Moon began to wax pale, when the face of the Virgin Mary was over shadowed by vertue of the holy God, and not only her face was thus shadowed, but also her body, for she was conceived with Child as another woman, wherefore Joseph would have forsaken her privily and gone away. This little Bird that came from the one side of the Moon betokeneth our Lord Jesus Christ, who at midnight was born of the Virgin Mary, wrapped

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in cloaths and laid in an Ox stall. The two beasts betoken the Ox and the Ass, that Joseph brought with him, which honours him in his birth. These other Beasts that came from far, betokeneth the Shepherds in the field, to whom the Angel said thus: Lo I shew you great joy. The Birds that sung so sweetly, betokeneth the Angels in Heaven, which sung at his birth this joyful Song: Glory be to God above, and peace to men on earth.

The King of Ampluy, which held war against the Emperor, betokeneth all mankind, that were contrary to God, as they were in the Debils power. But immediately, when our Lord Jesus Christ was born, he bowed himself to God, and besought him of peace, when he received his baptism, for at our baptism we promised to draw onely to God, and forsake the Devil and all his pomp. The King gabe his Daughter in marriage to the Emperors Son; Right so every one of us ought to gibe his soul in marriage to Gods Son, for he is always ready to receibe our soul as his Spouse; according to the Scripture, saying thus, I will marry thee to me. But ere our soul may come to the Palace of Heaven, she must sail by the sea of the world, in the ship of good life: but oftentimes there ariseth a tempest in the sea, that is, trouble of this world, the temptations of the flesh, and the

ſuggeſtion of the Devil ariſeth ſuddenly, and drowneth the vertues that the ſoul receiued in Baptiſm, nevertheleſs yet falleth ſhe not out of the ſhip of charity, but kéepeth her ſelf ſurely therein by faith and hope. For as the Apoſtle ſaith, By hope we be ſaved. For it is impoſſible to be ſaved without hope or faith. The great Whale that followeth the maiden betokens the Devil, which by night and by day, lieth in weight to overcome the ſoul by ſin: Therefore do we as the maiden did, ſmite the fire of Charity and Love, out of the ſtone, that is Chriſt, according to this ſaying, I am a ſtone, and certainly the Devil ſhall have no power over us: Many men begin well, as did the Maid, but at laſt they be weary of their good works, and ſo they ſléep in ſin; And anon when the Devil perceiveth this, he devoureth the ſinner in his evil thoughts, delights, conſent and works. Therefore if any of us fall our ſelves in ſuch wiſe under the power of the Devil, let him do as the maiden did, ſmite the Devil with the knife of bitter Repentance, then kindle the fire of Charity, and without doubt he ſhall caſt thée on the land of good life.

The Earl that came with his ſervants to ſlay the whale, betokeneth a diſcréet Preacher, dwelleth beſide the Sea, that is, beſide the world, and not in the world, that is, net drawn to worldly delectation, but ever ready with

good

good words of Holy Scripture to kill the Devil, and to destroy his power. We must all cry with an high voice, as the Maiden did, acknowledging our sins, and then shall we be delivered from the Devil, and nourished with vertuous exercise.

The Emperor sheweth this Maiden three Vessels, that is, God putteth before man life and death, good and evil, and which of these he chosen he shall obtain. Therefore saith Solomon, death and life is set before man, chuse which him list. And yet man is uncertain whether he will chuse life or death.

By the first vessel of gold, full of dead mens bones, is understood mighty worldly rich men, who shine like gold outwardly in riches and pomp of the world, nevertheless within they be full of dead mens bones, that is, the works they have done in this world, be dead in the sight of God through deadly sin. Therefore if any man chuse such a life, he shall have that he deserveth, that is, such men be like unto Tombs, that be white, and royally painted and arrayed without, and covered with cloath of gold and silk, but within there is nothing but dry bones.

By the second vessel of Silver, we ought to understand some Justices, and wise men of this world, who shine in fair speech, but within they be full of worms and earth, that

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is, their fair speech shall abail them no more at the day of judgement, then the worms of the earth, and paradventure less, for then shall they suffer everlasting pain, if they die in deadly sin.

By the third vessel of Lead, full of gold and precious stones, we are to understand a simple and poor life, which the chosen souls chuse, that they may be married to our blessed Lord Jesus Christ by humility and obedience, and such men bear with them precious stones, that is, Faith and her fruitful works pleasing to God: by which at the judgement day, they be espoused to our Lord Jesus Christ, and obtain the Heritage of Heaven. Unto the which bring us our Saviour Jesus Christ that died on the Cross. Amen.

The Argument.

Man by baptism promised to live in the fear of God, and forsake the Devil. Christ forroweth for our sins, he requireth dutiful service of us in six several ages, but we are always unready for him, yet the mercy of God is favourable towards us, that he spareth even till the last age of man, vouchsafing if then we repent us, and call for grace, beleiving in his mercies, to receive us into the Throne of his heavenly grace.

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The 33. History.

SOmetime there dwelt in Rome a mighty Emperor nam'd Calapodius who took a fair Lady to his Wife. They were not long together before that this Empress conceived and bear him a son a goodly child and a fair. When he was of age, he was set to School, and when he came to twenty years of age, he desired his Fathers Hetitage, saying: Dear Father, you are an old man, and may not govern your Empire, therefore if it please you to give it me, it shall be to your ease. Then answered the Emperor and said: Dear Son, I dread me sore, that when the Empire is in thy power, thou wilt not fulfil my will or my desire.

Then answered the Empress (for so much as she loved her Son better then her Husband) and said: My Lord, that cannot be, for thou hast but one Son, therefore I believe he will fulfil thine intent in all things: This Empire may help him well, and therefore it is best to grant him the Empire. Then answered the Emperor and said, I will first have of him a Letter of Obligatory, that whensoever he doth any thing against my will, that then I will dispose him from the Empire without any contradiction.

The Son granted this, and did make the Obligation, and sealed it. And when this

was

was done, this young Emperor waxed so proud, that he feared neither God nor man, and did very much harm. But his father suffered it patiently, for he would be corrected by no man.

Now at last there fell a great dearth in the Empire, so that many men dyed for want of food: this old Emperor was all alone himself, and began to have need, wherefore he went to his Son to have some maintenance, which his son granted and suffered, for a time. But within short time his father began to wax sick wherefore he called his Son, and prayed him to give him a draught of his Must. His son answered and said, that will I not do, for my Must is not good for your complexion. Then said the Emperor, I pray thee give me a draught of thy wine. His son answered and said, that he should have none, for my wine is not yet fined, and if I touch it, it will trouble, and therefore I will not broach it till it be cleared and fined. Then said his father, give me some of the third Tun. That I will not do (quoth he) for that wine is not good for a sick man. Then his father prayed him heartily for a draught of the fourth Tun. Then answered he and said, therefore ye get none, for it is feeble and without any sustentation, and such wine is not good for you, for it is not comfortable. Then said his Father, now

good

good Son give me the the fift Tun. That will I not quoth he, for that Tun is full of lies and dregs, and such as is not for Men, nor scarcely for Hogs.

When his Father saw he might get nothing of him, after he was perfectly well, he went to the King of Jerusalem, and made his complaint of his Son, and shewed him the letter of Obligatory, which his Son had made, whereby his Father might put him out of his Empire without any gain-saying. When the King heard this, he called the Emperors son to answer his Father: And when he came he could not answer to his Father with any reason, wherefore the King put him out of his Empire, and seated his Father therein again: and so he continued all the dayes of his life.

The Moral.

This Emperor betokeneth our Lord Jesus Christ, according to that saying: Is not he thy Father that hath brought thee up? he hath made thee, &c. Deut. 32. 6. The Son betokeneth man to whom he gave all the Empire of this World according to the Scripture Heaven he hath given to our Lord, and earth to man. Mankind made an Obligation with our Lord Jesus Christ, when he received the Sacrament of Baptism, wherein he promised to serve him truly: and forsake

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the Devil, and all his pomp and vain glory. This Emperor began to wax sick on a day, that is, our Lord Jesus Christ is troubled as often as a Christian sinneth and breaketh his commandements, wherefore he thirsts greatly for the help of our souls, and he asked a draught of the first Tun, that is, he asketh of man the first age of his childhood to be spent in his service, but incontinently the wicked child answereth and saith, I may not do so, for my childhood is musty. that is, it is tender and so young, that it may not attempt so soon to serve God: which is manifestly against the truth, for the child of one day is not without sin. For Saint Gregory in his Dialogues saith: The children of five years of age drive out spirits from the bosomes of their Fathers. Then when God seeth that he cannot have of thy Must of his childhood, then he desireth wine of the second Tun. Then answereth the wicked youth, and saith, that his wine is not apt to serve God. And when God may not have the second Tun, then asketh he of the third Tun, that is, of the third Tun of his youth. Then answereth the wicked young man, and saith: The wine is very strong and mighty, and therefore his youth ought to be spent about manly deeds on this world, and not in good life, which would make him feeble and weak: when God seeth that he may

not

not have of this Tun, Then asked he of the fourth Tun. And then answereth the wicked man in his manhood, and saith, that aged men are feeble, and may not fast nor do any hard repentance, and if he did, he should be the cause of his own death; Then asked our Lord of the fifth Tun, that is of his old age, when he stoopeth, & may not go without a staff. But the wicked old man excuseth himself, and saith that his wine is too feeble to give to such a feeble man, for if he should fast one day, it were time to morrow to make his grave. And when our Lord seeth that he may not have of the fifth Tun, then asked he of the sixth Tun, that is when a man is blind, and may go to sin no more, yet desireth he of such a man drink, that is, help of his soul: But the wretched man lying in despair saith: Alas, alas, wo to me, because I served not Almighty God my maker, and Redeemer here in times past, while I was in youth and in prosperity: now there is nothing left but only the lees and dregs of wretchedness, therefore what shall it avail me now to turn toward God? But for such men we should lament.

Nevertheless, God is merciful, that though he might have no service of man in all his time, yet he is content to have the lees of his Tun, that is, the good will, though he doth not serve him otherwise, and so shall his good

will

will ſtand him in ſtead of godly life. For in what hour the ſinner doth repent him of his ſin from the bottom of his heart, he ſhall be forgiven, as Ezekiel witneſſeth. But there be many that will give no Wine, nor no other thing to him, wherefore Chriſt ſhall complain to the King of Jeruſalem, that is, to the God-head at the judgment day, and then as he is God and man, ſhall he give ſentence definitive againſt ſuch men: ſaying, I have hungred, and ye gave me no meat, I have been naked and ye cloathed me not: I have thirſted and ye gave me no drink. Lo, thus ſhall he rehearſe to thee the fruits of thy faith. And when this is done, then ſhall ſuch men be put to everlaſting pain, and the juſt man into everlaſting bliſs. Unto the which bring us our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Amen.

The Argument.

Man being captivated by Satan, the World refuſeth to do for him, til the God-head of the heavenly Father, bearing an earneſt affection unto him, did eſpouſe him, and embrace him within the boſom of inward & entire love, adventuring what he might to ſet all mankind at liberty, yet grudgeth the world that we ſhould always ſerve our God, and forſake her; but to eſchew all ſuch malignity we are taught in this Hiſtory.

The 34 Hiſtory.

IN Rome dwelt ſometime a mighty Emperour named Anthony, under whoſe reign

reign the Robers of the Sea had taken prison-
er, a mighty mans Son of another Region,
and brought him to the Emperors prison be-
ing bound. When this young man was
thus in prison, he incontinent wrote to his
Father for his ransome, but he would neither
pay his ransome, nor send him any thing for
to comfort him: This when he heard, he
wept sore, and would not be comforted for the
unkindness of his Father.

This Emperor had a fair Daughter: which
visited every day the prisoner, and comforted
him as much as she might, wishing him to be
merry. To whom the Prisoner answered and
said: How shall I be merry? or how may I
joy, thus to lye fast bound in prison from the
sight of man? and notwithstanding this, it
griebeth me most that my Father will not
pay my ransome.

When the Maiden heard this, she was mo-
ved with pity, and said: Dear friend, I am
sorry for thee, and therefore if thou wilt grant
me one thing, I shall deliver thee from thy
anguish and pain. What thing is that:
(quoth he) That thou wilt take me for thy
wife; then said the Prisoner, I promise you
surely to fulfil your request and desire, and
for the more assurance I plight you my
troth. When he had so done, shortly after
the Damsel delivered him out of prison,

and fled away with him home to his Fathers house.

When his Father saw his Son and the Maiden together, he asked the cause why he brought the Maiden with him? Then said his Son: Sir, this Damsel delibered me out of Prison, and therefore she shall be my Wife. Then said his Father, I will not consent that she shall be thy Wife for two reasonable causes, which I shall forthwith shew thee,

The first in this, it is not unknown to thee, that the Emperor her father might have had for thy deliverance great plenty of riches, and for as much as she was untrue to her own Father, and true to thee, it seemed well that thou shouldest not trust long to her: for being false to her own Father, it is to be feared she will not be true to another man.

The second reason is this, the cause why she delibered thee out of Prison, was neither for pitty nor for love, but for carnal lust that she had to thee. For at thy deliverance she made Covenant with thee to be thy Wife, and had of thee thy troth, and hath accompanied with thee: therefore son (saith he) it is no reason that she should be thy Wife.

The Maiden answered to these objections, and said: As for the first reason that thou layest against me, that I should be untrue to my Father, that is false: For my Father hath plenty

plenty of riches, and thy Son is but poor, and therefore I help him for pitty, and for none other cause, and nevertheless, thou that art his Father would not pay his ransom, that he might be delivered out of prison. Lo, for this cause I have delivered him, therefore I am kinder to him then thou that art his own Father, and he is more beholding to me than to thee.

Unto the other reason: whereas thou say'st, that I delivered him because of carnal lust: I answer and say plainly, that it is not truth; for all manner of carnal love is caused of strength, and beauty, but thy Son is neither strong nor beautiful, for his imprisonment hath taken away his strength and beauty, for by the pain he hath had in prison, he is brought low, and made unlusty to sport, and therefore pitty only moved me to deliver him, and not carnal lust.

Then said the Son: Dear Father, for as much as I was in peril of death, and wrote unto you to pay my ransome, that I might be delivered, and you would not help me, but this gentle Damsel for pitty hath saved me from death, and delivered me out of prison, therefore surely she shall be my Wife. So forthwith he married her with great honor, and with her ended his life.

The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperor betokeneth the Father of Heaven. The young man which was taken with the Pirats of the Sea, betokens all mankind, which was taken with the Devil, by the sin of our forefather Adam and was cast into the Prison of Hell with great sorrow and pain. His Father would not ransome him, that is the world would do nothing for him.

This fair Daughter betokeneth the Godhead, which came down from Heaven, and took manhood of the Virgin Mary, and so made a Ghostly marriage between him and man: and upon this condition he delivered mankind out of the prison of Hell, when he came from Heaven and forsook the fellowship of Angels for to dwell with us in this wretched vale of tears. But the Father, that betokeneth the World, grudgeth ever against him, and would not suffer that the Soul of man should become the spouse of Jesus Christ, but that she should alway serve him, and should forsake our Lord.

Therefore if we follow the world and its vanities, certainly we shall fall into the snare of the Devil. From the which defend us our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Argument.

It is the Ordinance of God, that no man shall labour for worldly promotion by coveteousness and falshood nor by deceit or other evil courses. Man for his first transgression should have been adjudged to perpetual torment in hell, had not the Son of God voluntarily offered himself to the death to save mankind, and destroy Satan his enemy, so that thereby he might live with him in the habitation of heaven everlastingly.

The 35. History.

SOmetime in Rome there dwelt a noble Emperor of great libelyhood, named Alexander, which above all vertues loved the vertue of bounty; wherefore he ordained a Law for great Charity, that no man under pain of death should turn a Plaice in his dish at his meat, but only eat the white side, and not the black, and if any man would attempt to do the contrary, he should suffer death without any pardon: but yet ere he died, he should ask three petitions of the Emperor what him list (except his life) which should be granted him.

It befel after upon a day, that there came an Earl and his Son, of a strange Country, to speak with the Emperor; And when the Earl was set at meat, he was served with a Plaice, and he which was an hungry, and had an appetite to his meat, after he had eaten the white side he turned the black side, and began to eat

thereof: wherefore straight way he was accused to the Emperor, because he had offended against the Law. Then said the Emperor Let him die according to the law without any delay.

When the Earls Son heard that his Father should die, immediately he fell down on both his knees before the Emperor, and said, O my reverend Lord, I most humbly intreat you, that I may die for my Father. Then said the Emperor: It pleaseth me well, so that one die for the offence. Then said the Earls Son, sith it is so, that I must die, I ask the benefit of the Law, that is, that I may have three petitions granted ere I die. The Emperor answered, and said: Ask what thou will, there shall no man say thee nay.

Then said this young knight: My Lord, you have but one Daughter, the which I desire of your Highness, that she may lie one night with me before I die. The Emperor granted for fulfilling of the Laws, though it were against his will. Nevertheless this knight defloured her not as that night: wherefore he greatly pleased the Emperor.

The second Petition is this. I ask all the treasure, and immediately the Emperor granted, because he would not be called a breaker of the Law. And when the Earls Son had received the Emperors treasure, he imparted

it doth to poor and to rich, by means whereof he obtained their good wills.

My third petition is this: I ask my Lord, that all their eyes may be put out incontinent, that saw my Father eat the black side of the Plaice, And they that saw him turn the Plaice bethought them, and said within themselves: if we acknowledge that we saw him do this trespass, then shall our eyes be put out: and therefore it is better that we hold us still; And so there was none found that would accuse him.

When the Earls Son heard this, he said to the Emperor: My Lord (quoth he) ye see there is no man accuseth my Father, therefore give me rightful judgement. Then said the Emperor, For as much as no man will acknowledge that they saw him turn the Plaice, therefore I will not that thy Father shall die. So thus the Son saved his Fathers life, and after the Decease of the Emperor married his Daughter.

The Moral.

Dear friends, this Emperor betokeneth the Father of Heaven, which ordained a Law, that no man should turn the black side of a Plaice; that is, there should no man labour for riches and promotion by covetousness and falshood. The Earl that came to the Emperor betokeneth Adam our fore-father, who

came out of the Land of Eden, and turned up the black side of the Plaice, when he eat of the Apple of the forbidden tree; wherefore he should have been condemned to everlasting death: but his Son, that betokeneth our Lord Jesus Christ, he took the flesh of Adam, and proferred himself voluntarily to die for him: and the Father of Heaven granted that he should go down to die for mankind.

Nevertheless, before he died, he asked three petitions of his Father of Heaven; The first was this, that he might have by him his Daughter, which betokeneth the soul of man, and bring her with him into the bosome of Heaven, according to the words in Osea, saying. I will wed her to my self.

The second Petition was this, all the Emperors treasure, which betokeneth the treasure of heaven, according to this Scriptue, Like as the Father hath disposed for me, so I dispose for you.

The third petition is this, that all their eyes should be put out, that is, that the Devil, and all false witnesses which accuse us true men, might be put from the light of heavenly grace.

And thus saved he mankind, and led him up with him unto the Palace of Heaven. Unto the which Palace bring us our Lord Jesus. Amen.

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The Argument.

The Father of Heaven of his meer grace promoteth some poor men, raising them from the dust to sit among Princes, but they extolling themselves without regard of Gods goodness, they are again made abject by him. The Devil worketh deceit in his members against the godly; Christ came down from heaven to minister the water of eternal life unto man, and by his death and passion to revive our souls (which before were dead) unto the firm state of eternal felicity, to purchase happiness with his precious blood.

The 36. History.

IN Rome there dwelt sometime a mighty Emperor, named Leonicius, who on a day rode to a Forrest to disport himself, where he met suddenly with a poor man, to whom he said thus: Friend, what art thou? and whence comest thou?

My Lord (quoth he) I am come from the next City; and I am your man. Then said the Emperor, thou seemest poor, therefore if thou be honest and true, I will promote thee to great riches and honor. Then answered the poor man, and said: my Lord, I promise you faithfully to be true to you as long as I live. The Emperor anon made him a Knight, and gave him great riches. When he was thus promoted, he waxed so proud, that he thought himself more able to be an Emperor then his Lord; wherefore he made suggestion to divers

Lords

Lords of that Empire, that he might usurp and take upon him through strength of them to be Emperor.

When the Emperor heard this, anon he exiled him and all those that were consenting to him, so they lived objects in great wretchedness and sorrow: and then the Emperor ordained other men in their stead, and gave them all the possession of these traitors.

And when the banished men heard that strangers had taken possession of their lands and goods, anon they conspired against them, and through treason requested them to a Banquet. And they as innocents, thinking upon no such treason, came at the day assigned, and were served with five poysoned Messes, whereby as many as tasted of those dishes died incontinent.

When the Emperor heard this, he was greatly moved, and assembled his counsel, to enquire what was best to be done for this treason, and for their death. Then said the Emperors Son: My Lord, I am your Son, and you are my Father, and therefore I shall give you good counsel, profitable to all men. Not far hence is a little Nation, wherein dwelleth a fair Maiden, and a gracious in the sight of every man, which hath an Orchard, wherein is a Well, the water whereof is of such vertue, that if it be cast upon a dead man,

straight-

straightway he shall live again and recover his life. Therefore my Lord, I shall descend unto that Nation, and seek that water, whereby they that were slain at the Banquet, may be restored again to life. And when the Emperor heard this, he greatly rejoyced, and said thus: Son thy counsel is good.

And straightway the Emperor Son went into the said Nation and fell in conceit with the Maiden, in so much that he entred into the Garden, and assailed to taste the water of the Well. And when he had so done, he made five deep trenches in the ground, in the which the water ran till it came where the dead men lay buried, hereupon when the water touched them, they arose from death to life. Then the Emperors Son with great joy led them unto his Father: And when the Emperor saw this, he was right joyful, wherefore he crowned his Son with a Laurel Crown in token of victory, and so ended his life in rest and peace.

The Moral.

Dear friends, this Emperor betokeneth the Father of heaven. The poor man that was promoted, betokeneth Lucifer, that was created of nought, and enthroned in thy Empire of Heaven with great joy and clearness but through his pride he thought he might be like unto the Almighty God, and not only like

him

him, but more then Almighty God: wherefor the Father of Heaven exiled him, and all them that conſented to him, to Hell: and in his place man was exalted to great joy and honour. The Devil ſeeing this, it much griebed him that man ſhould come to ſuch glory, and honour, and bad Adam and Eve to a Banquet, when they did eat of the Apple againſt Gods Commandement, and counſelled them thus, ſaying: In what hour ye eat of this Apple, ye ſhall be like Gods, knowing good and evil. And at this curſed banquet they were ſerved with five meſſes that were poyſoned, that is, their five wits were accorded in eating of the Apple, whereof man was infected and died. This hearing the Emperors Son, Chriſt Jeſus, moved with mercy, he came down from heaven into this world and acquainted him ſo well with the bleſſed Virgin Mary, that he found in her the well of manhood, and conjoyned it to the Godhead, according to the Scripture: I am the well of life, who drinketh of me ſhall not thirſt. After that he ſuffered to be made five trenches in the ground, that is, five wounds in his body, out of the which ran both blood and water, whereby all mankind was raiſed from death to life, and led them up into the Palace of Heaven, unto the which bring us our bleſſed Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, Amen.

The Argument.

The Father of heaven extendeth his goodness divers ways towards frail man, yet he taketh contrary ways, living in spiritual fornication, for the which being exiled from the state of felicity, he is compelled to lead a miserable and painful life. But being reconciled by the death of his Saviour, he possesseth the Heritage of heavenly felicity.

The 27. History.

SOmetime in Rome there raigned a mighty Emperor named Dunstanus, in whose Empire there dwelt a gentle Knight that had two Sons. One of his Sons matched himself against his Fathers will with a common Harlot. The Knight hearing this, exiled his Son from him; and when he was thus exiled, he begot on this woman a Son: and soon after that he waxed sick, and in penury, wherefore he sent Messengers to his Father, beseeching him of his mercy: this hearing his Father, he took compassion and ruth on him, wherefore he was reclaimed from banishment; And when he was thus brought again to his Fathers grace, he gave his child which he had by the common woman to his Father, who kindly received him and nourished him as his Son.

When the other Son heard this, he said to his Father: Father, quoth he, it seemeth to

me

me that you are out of your right mind, which I will prove by good reason. For he is out of his right mind that receiveth a false Heir, and nourisheth him, whose Father hath endamaged and griebed him before Now my brother which begat this Child hath done you great injury, When he married the common woman, against your will and commandement, therefore me thinketh that you are out of your right mind.

Then answered his Father and said; because thy brother is reconciled to me, thou art enbious, and thou art unkind to thy own brother, willing to put him from thy fellowship for ebermore, but sothly no unkind man shall have Heritage except he be reconciled, and yet thou neber reconciledst thy self to him for thy unkindness, for thou mightest habe reconciled thy self to him, but thou wouldest not, therefore of my Heritage getteſt thou no part,

The Moral.

Dear friends, the father of these two brethren betokeneth the Father of Heaben. And his two Sons betoken the nature of Angels, and the nature of Man: For man was married to a common woman or Harlot, when he eat the Apple against the commandement of God, wherefore he was exiled by the Father of Heaben, and put from the joyes of

Paradise,

paradise. The Son of the common woman betokeneth mankind. This knights Son, that is Adam, lived in great misery, forafter his sin he was put from joy into this wretched valley of tears and weeping, according to the scripture, In the sweat of thy brows thou shalt eat thy bread. But after by the passion of Christ he was reconciled. But the other Son that betokeneth the Devil, was ever unkind, and grudged daily against our reconciling, saying, that by reason of sin he ought not to come unto the Heritage of heaven. Unto the which bring us our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Argument.

We ought in every vocation and calling to behave our selves justly, and to use the poor man with equity: we must not injure rich men. The mighty men are to be honoured, and not defauded of their dignity and estate. being men of sincere life: they that do contrary to the meaning of dutiful behoof herein, are worthy of everlasting death.

The 38 History.

SOmetime there dwelt in Rome a mighty Emperor named Donatus, which did make three Images, of the which one held out his hand straight unto the people, and had on his finger a ring of gold. The second Image had a Beard of gold. And the third had a Mantle of gold. Commanding upon pain of death, that

no

no man should take away from these images, the King, the Beard, nor the Mantle.

It befell afterward upon a time, that one Dionyse, a tyrant, came into the Temple, and took away the King from the first Image, the Beard from the second, and the Mantle from the third. And when he had thus done, he was forthwith accused unto the Emperor, and brought before him, and strictly examined of that trespass, why he despoiled the Images against the Emperors commandement.

Then answered Dionyse, and said as followeth: My reverend Lord, it is lawfull to answer for my self: When I entered into the Temple, the first Image held forth his hand straight to me, as who would say, I give thee this King, and therefore I took the King as the gift of the Image, being loth to refuse so gentle an offer. And when I saw the second Image having a Beard, I thought thus with my self: I knew sometime the Father of the Image, which had no Beard and now his Son hath a Beard, which is against reason the Son to have a Beard and the Father none; and therefore I took from him his Beard, ℔ he should be like his Father. After that, when I saw the third having a Mantle of gold, I thought that the Mantle of

gold

gold was not behoveful for him in Winter: for gold is naturally cold, which might be cause of his death, & therefore I took it from him, because it was too cold in Winter, and too hot in Summer.

When Dionyse had excused him by these reasons, the Emperor answered and said: Thou hast answered wickedly for thy self, what should cause the rather then any other man to dispoil the Images, for as much as I commanded that no man should take any thing away from them, therefore thine own mouth hath condemned thee. Anon the Emperor called to him one of his Squires, and charged him to smite off his head, and incontinently he took and did him, unto him as the Emperor had commanded, and so he died a shameful death.

The Moral.

Dear friends, this Emperor betokeneth Almighty God the Father of Heaven. The three Images betokeneth the poor men, the rich men, and the mighty men of this world. The tyrant Dyonyse betokeneth all officers in every estate, lewdly behaving themselves, which take away from poor men the Ring off their fingers, and say thus, I may take that is given me: For when the poor man hath ought to do, he must needs put forth his hand to give whether he will

so on, if he would speed. They take away the Beard from the rich man, and say thus: This man is richer then his Father was, therefore take we his livelyhood from him, and make him like his Fore-father. They take also the Mantle of gold from the mighty men: when they see any man of honour and good living, willing to correct such open mis-doers, then say they, this man is too cold, for he inclineth nothing to our opinions, and also he is too hot in power and working against us, therefore go we and take from him the Mantle of might, and so they accuse him and put him out of his office. But certainly all such men stand in peril of everlasting death: From the which save us, he that shed his precious blood for us, Amen.

The Argument.

Man ought to nourish Christ in his heart by faith and fruits of good life: The reward of such as have care unto the commandements and institutions of God. We must watch lest we fall into temptation: These things considered, we shall then by Gods gracious good providence, attain unto the reward of heavenly and everlasting bliss.

The

The 39. History.

THere dwelt sometime in Rome a mighty Emperor named Emilius, who had a fair young Lady to his Wife, upon whom he had begotten a fair Son. When the States of the Empire heard this, they came to the Emperor and besought him to have the keeping of his Son. Immediately the Emperor sent a Herauld throughout the City, proclaiming, that in whose house were first found fire and water, the good man of that house should have his Son in keeping, and to nourish. Anon then the Emperor made a Proclamation, that whosoever had his Son to keep, should nourish him cleanly, and feed him with wholsome meats and drinks. And when the Child came to Age, then should the Keeper be promoted to great honour, wherefore many men made ready fire and water, in hope to have the Child: but in the night, when every man was asleep, there came a Tyrant named Sulapius, that quenched the fire, and threw out the water. Nevertheless among all other, there was a man named Jonathas, that laboured so diligently, that he kept both day and night fire and water.

In a morning early, the Herauld at the

Emperors commandement, went through the City, and sought in every house for fire and water, but he could find none till he came to Jonathas house, where he found both fire and water ready, wherefore he was brought before the Emperor, who delivered him his Son according to the Proclamation.

When Jonathas had the Emperors Son he led him home unto his House. And soon after he sent for Masons and Carpenters and did make a strong Chamber of lime and stone. And when the chamber was finished, he sent for Painters to paint on the wall of the Chamber ten Images, with this Posey painted above their heads, Whoso defiles these Images shall die a cruel death. And then caused a pair of Gallows to be drawn on the door, and figured a man hanging there upon, with this posey painted above his head, So shall he be served that nourisheth the Emperors Son amiss. Also he caused a Chair of gold to be made, and himself sitting therein crowned with a Crown of gold, with this superscription above the head: Who so nourisheth the Empeors son cleanly thus shall he be honoured.

When this was done, oftentimes as he was a sleep, he was greatly tempted to defile these then excellent Images: but anon he re-

read the superscriptions above their heads and then all the temptations ceased. And when the Emperors son was chilly kept, then he went to the Gallows and read that writing which was written above his own head, and for dread thereof kept the child better, and was diligent to give attendance on him.

And when he beheld the chair, and him sitting therein crowned with a crown of gold, he was right joyful, thinking to have good reward for keeping of the Emperors son. When the Emperor heard of this diligent demeanor about his Son, he sent for him and thanking him for his well keeping and nourishing of him, he after promoted him to great honour and dignity.

The Moral.

This Emperor betokeneth the Father of heaven, the Empress betokeneth the blessed Virgin Mary; The Emperors Son betokeneth our Lord Jesus Christ; The herald that was sent throughout the City, betokeneth Saint John Baptist, who was sent before our Lord to prepare the way before him, according to the holy Scripture: Behold I send mine Angel before me, &c. The Masters that desired the Emperors Son to

nourish, betokens the Patriarchs and Pr
phets, which desire greatly to nourish
Lord Jesus Christ, and also to see him
but they might not see him nor nouri
him, for fire and water which should ha
been cause of their sight, was not with th
perfectly.

The fire betokeneth the Holy Ghost whic
had not yet appeared to them, for they we
not washed with the water of Baptism.
so ye may understand by the fire perfect Ch
rity, and by the water true Contrition
which do now adays fail in many men, a
therefore they may not have the little Chi
Jesus in their hearts.

Jonathas that watched so diligently b
tokeneth every good Christian man, whic
studieth either to watch in well-doing, yiel
ing to God for sins the fire of charitable r
pentance, and the water of Contrition
But oftentimes the Tyrant, which betoke
eth the Devil, putteth out the fire of Ch
rity out of mens hearts, and casteth t
water of Contrition, so that they m
not nourish the little Child Jesus. Ther
fore let us watch as Jonathas did, that t
enter not into temptation. And call t
unto Masons, that is, discreet Preacher
which can make in our hearts a Chamb
of stone, that is, a sure Faith and Hop

The

Then call we to us Painters, that is, Ministers of Gods Word, which can paint in our hearts ten Images, that is, the ten commandements, which if thou keep and observe daily, without doubt thou shalt be honoured in Heaven.

And if thou keep well the Emperors Son, thou shalt sit in a Chair of Gold, crowned with a Crown of Gold. And if that thou nourish him not well, without doubt thou shalt be in danger of torment in Hell. From the which preserve us our blessed Saviour Jesus.

The Argument.

The Soul of man espoused unto Christ, the flesh procureth the same to sin. The Christian soul by faith withstandeth temptation. The redemption of mankind from sin and death. The deceits of unthankful hearts. The spirits health, the defects of the flesh. After a pure repentance followeth perpetual joy and felicity both of soul and body.

The 40. History.

In Rome dwelt sometime a mighty Emperor named Manelay, which had wedded the Kings daughter of Hungaria, a fair Lady, and a gracious in all her works, specially she was merciful. On a time, as the Em-

peroz lay in his bed, he bethought him that he would go visit the Holy Land. And on the morrow he called to him the Empress his Wife, and his own only Brother, and thus he said: Dear Lady, I may not, nor will not, hide from you the privities of my heart: I purpose to visit the Holy Land, wherefore I ordain thee principally to be Lady and Governess over all my Empire, and all my people; and under thee I ordain here my Brother to be thy Steward, for to provide all things that may be profitable to my Empire and my people.

Then said the Empress: Sith it will no otherwise be, but that needs thou wilt go to visit the City of Jerusalem, I shall be in your absence as true as any Turtle that hath lost her Mate, for as I believe, ye shall not escape thence with your life.

The Emperor anon comforts her with fair words, and kissed her, and after that took his leave of her and all other, and went toward the City of Jerusalem.

And anon after the Emperor was gone his Brother became so proud, that he oppressed poor men, and robbed rich men: and he did worse then this, for he daily stirred the Empress to commit sin with him: But she ever answered again as an holy and devout woman, and said: I will (quoth she) never consent

conſent to you nor to any other as long as my Lord liveth, nevertheleſs this Knight would not leave with this anſwer, but ever when he found her alone he made his complaint to her, and ſtirred her by all the ways that he could to ſin with him.

When this Lady ſaw that he would not ceaſe for any anſwer, nor would not amend himſelf: when ſhe ſaw her time, ſhe called to her three or four of the worthieſt men of the Empire, and ſaid to them thus: It is not unknown to you, that my Lord the Emperor ordained me principal Governor of this Empire, and alſo he ordained his brother to be Steward under me, and that he ſhould do nothing without my counſel, but he doth all the contrary: for he oppreſſeth greatly poor men, and likewiſe robbeth the rich men; and yet he would do more then this, if he might have his intent, wherefore I command you in my Lords name, that you binde him faſt, and caſt him into priſon.

Then ſaid they, ſoothly he hath done many evil deeds ſince our Lord the Emperor went, therefore we be ready to obey your commandements, but in this matter you muſt anſwer for us to the Lord our Emperor.

Then ſaid ſhe: Dread ye not, if my Lord knew

knew what he had done as well as I, he would put him to the foulest death that could be thought: Immediately these men laid hands on him, and bound him fast with iron chains, and put him in prison, whereas he lay long time after, till at the last it fortuned, there came tidings that the Emperour was coming home, and had obtained great renown and victory. When his Brother heard of his coming, he said, would to God my Brother might not finde me in prison: for if he do, he will inquire the cause of my imprisonment of the Empress, and she will tell him all the truth, how I moved her to commit sin, and so for her I shall have no favour of my Brother, but lose my life: this know I well, therefore it shall not be so. Then sent he a messenger unto the Empress praying her that she would vouchsafe to come to the Prison-door, that he might speak a word or two with her.

The Empress came to him, and enquired of him what he would have. He answered and said: O Lady, have mercy upon me, for if the Emperour my Brother finde me in prison, then shall I die without any remedy.

Then said the Empress: if I might know that thou wouldest be a good man, and leave thy folly, thou shouldest finde grace. Then did

did he promise her assuredly to be true, and to amend all his Trespass. When he had thus promised, the Empress delibered him anon, and made him to be bathed and shaven, and apparalled him worthily according to his state, and then she said unto him thus, Now good Brother take thy Steed and come with me, that we may meet my Lord. He answered and said: Lady, I am ready to fulfil your will and commandment in all things; and then the Empress took him with her, and many other Knights, and so rode forth to meet the Emperour: and as they rode together by the way, they saw a great Hart run before them, wherefore every man with such Hounds as they had, chased him on Horseback, so that with the Empress was left no creature save only the Emperors brother, who seeing that no man was there but they two, thus he said unto the Empress: Loe Lady here is beside a private Forrest, and long it is ago that I spake to thee of love, come now and consent unto me that I may lie with thee.

Then said the Empress: Ah fool, what may this be? Yesterday I delibered thee out of prison upon thy promise in hope of amendment, and now thou art returned to thy folly again, wherefore I say now unto thee as I have said before, there shall no man do such a thing

thing with me, save only my Lord the Emperour, which ought of very duty for to do. Then said he, if thou wilt not consent to me, I shall hang thee here upon a tree in this Forrest, where no man shall find thee, and so shalt thou dye an evill death. The Empress answered meekly, and said, Though thou smite off my head, or put me to death with all manner of torments, thou shalt never have my consent to such a sin.

When he heard this he uncloathed her all save her Smock, and hanged her up by the hair upon a tree, and tyed her Steed before her, and so rode to his fellows, and told them that a great Host of men met him, and took the Empress away from him, and when he had told them this they made all great sorrow.

It befel on the third day after, there came an Earl to hunt in that Forrest, and as he rode beating the bushes, he unkennels a For, whom his Hounds followed fast till they came near the tree where the Empress hanged. And when the Dogs smelt the savour of her, they left the For, and ran towards the tree as fast as they could.

The Earl seeing this, wondred greatly, and spurring his horse, followed them till he came where the Empress hanged. When the Earl saw

saw her thus hanging, he marvelled greatly, for as much as she was right fair & beautiful to behold, wherefore he said unto her in this manner wise, O Woman who art thou? and of what Country? and wherefore hangest thou here in this manner

The Empress that was not yet fully dead, but at point readie to die, answered and said, I am quoth she, a strange woman, and am come out of a far Countrey, but how I came hither God knoweth. Then answered the Earl and said, whose horse is this that standeth by thee bound to this tree? Then answered the Lady & said that it was hers. When the Earl heard this, he saw well that she was a Gentlewoman and come of noble linage, wherefore he was the rather moved with pity, and said unto her: O fair Lady, thou seemest of gentle blood, and therefore I purpose to deliver thee from this mischief, if thou wilt promise to go with me, and nourish my fair young Daughter, and teach her at home in my Castle, for I have no child but only her, and if thou keep her well thou shalt have a good reward for thy labour. Then said she: As far forth as I can or may, I shall fulfill your intent. And when she had thus promised him, he took her down off the tree, and led her home to his Castle, and gave her the keeping of his,

Daughter,

daughter, that he loved so much, and she was cherished so well, that she lay every night in the Earls chamber, and his daughter with her: and in the chamber every night there burned a Lamp, which hanged between the Empresses bed and the Earls bed. This Lady behaved her self so gently, that she was beloved of every creature. There was at that time in the Earls house a Steward which much loved this Empress, and often spake to her of his love. But she answered him again, and said: Know ye, dear friend, for a certainty, that I will never love any man in such manner wise, but only him whom I am greatly bounden to love by Gods Commandement.

Then said the Steward: Then thou wilt not consent unto me? Sir, quoth she, what need you any more to ask such things? The Vow that I have made, I will truly keep and hold by the grace of God.

And when the Steward heard this, he went his way, in great wrath and anger, thinking within himself, if I may, I shall be revenged on thee.

It befell upon a night within short time after, that the Earls chamber-door was forgotten and left unshut, which the Steward had anon perceived: And when they were all asleep, he went and spyed by the light of

the

the Lamp where the Empress and the young Maiden lay together, and with that he drew out his knife, and cutting the throat of the Earls Daughter, and put the knife into the Empresses hand, she being asleep and nothing knowing thereof, to the intent that when the Earl awaked, he should think that she had cut his daughters throat, and so would she be put to a shameful death for his mischievous deed. And when the Damsel was thus slain, and the bloody knife in the Empresses hand, the Countess awaked out of her sleep, and saw by the light of the Lamp the bloody knife in the Empresses hand, wherefore she was almost out of her wits, and said the Earl, O my Lord, behold in yonder Ladies hand a wonderful thing.

The Earl awaked, and looked toward the Empresses bed, and saw the bloody knife, as the Countess had said: wherefore he was greatly moved, and cryed to her and said: Awake woman out of thy sleep, what thing is this that I see in thy hand. Then the Empress through his cry awaked out of her sleep, and in her waking the knife fell out of her hand, and with that she looked by her, and found the Earls Daughter dead by her side, and all the bed besprinkled with blood, wherefore with an high voice she cryed and said, alas, alas, and wo is me, my Lords daughter is slain.

Then

Then cryed the Countess unto the Earl with a pittious voice, and said: O my Lord let this Devilish woman be put to the cruell death that can be thought, which thus hath slain our only child.

Then when the Countess had said thus to the Earl, he said to the Empress in this wise. The high God knoweth that thou mischievous woman hast slain my Daughter with thine own hands, for I saw the bloody knife in thy hand, and therefore thou shalt die a foul death. Then said the Earl in this wise: O thou woman, were it not, I dread God greatly, I should cleave thy body with my sword in two parts, for I delibered thee from hanging, and now thou hast slain my Daughter; nevertheless for me thou shalt have no harm, therefore go thy way out of this City, without any delay, for if I find thee here after this day, thou shalt dye a most cruel death.

Then arose this woful Empress, and did on her cloathes, and after leapt on her Palfray, and rode toward the East alone, without any safe conduct, and as she rode thus mourning by the way, she espied on the left side of the way a pair of Gallows, and seven Officers leading a man to be hanged, wherefore she was moved with great pitty, and smote her Horse with her stick, and rode

to

to them, praying them she might redeem that mis-doer if he might be saved from death by any means.

Then said they, Lady, it pleaseth us well that you redeem him. Anon the Empress accorded with them. And payed his ransome, and he was delibered.

Then said she to him: Now my good friend be true unto me till thou die, sith I have delibered thee from death.

On my soul (quoth he) I promise you ever to be true. And when he had thus said, he followed the Lady still, til they came nigh a City, and then said the Empress to him: good friend, quoth she, go forth thy way afore me into the City, and see thou take up for us an honest lodging, for there I purpose to rest a while. Her man went forth as she commanded, and took up her a good lodging, and an honest, where she abode a long time. When the men of the City perceived her beauty, they wondred greatly, wherefore many of them crabed of her unlawful love, but all was in vain, for they might not speed in any wise.

It fortuned after upon a day, that there came a ship full of Merchandise, and arrived in the Haven of that City. When the Lady heard this, she said unto her servant

Go to the ſhip and ſée if there be any cloath for my uſe.

Her ſervant went forth to the Ship, where as he found many very fine cloaths: where fore he prayed the Maſter of the ſhip, that he would come into the City and ſpeak with his Lady. The Maſter granted him, and ſo the ſervant came home to his Lady before, and warned her of the coming of the Maſter of the Ship. Soon after the Maſter of the Ship came and ſaluted her courteouſly: and the Lady receibed him according to his degrée, praying him that ſhe might habe for her money ſuch cloath as might be profitable for her wearing. Then he granted that ſhe ſhould habe any thing that liked her, and ſoon they were agreed, wherefore the ſervant went immediately again with the Maſter of the ſhip for the cloath. And when they were both within on ſhipboard, the Maſter ſaid to the Ladies ſervant: My dear friend, to thée I would open my mind, if I might truſt to thée, and if thou help me, thou ſhalt habe of me a great reward.

Then anſwered he and ſaid: I ſhall (quoth he (be ſworn to thée to kéep thy counſel and fulfill thine intent as far forth as I can.

Then ſaid the Maſter of the Ship, I lob thy Lady more then I can tell thee, for her beauty and feature is ſo excellent

that I would give for the love of her all the gold that I have: and if I may obtain the love of her through thy help, I will give thee whatsoever thou wilt desire of me.

Then said the Ladies servant: tell me by what means I may best help thee. Then said the Master of the Ship, go home to thy Lady again, and tell her that I will not deliver to thee the cloath except she come her self, and do thou but bring her to my Ship, and if the wind be good and fit, then I purpose to lead her away. Thy counsel is good, quoth the Ladies servant, therefore give me some reward, and I shall fulfil thy desire.

Now when he had received his reward he went again to the Lady, and told her, that by no means the Master of the Ship would deliver him the Cloth, except she came her self.

The Lady believed her servant, and went to the Ship. Now when she was within the Ship-board, her servant abode without.

When the Master saw that she was within the ship, and the wind was good, he drew up the Sail and sailed forth.

When the Lady perceived this, thus she said to the Master: O Master (quoth she)

what reaſon is this that thou haſt done to me? The Maſter anſwered und ſaid: Madam, certainly it is ſo, that I muſt nèds lie with thée, and afterward eſpouſe thée. O good Sir quoth ſhe I habe made a bow, that I ſhall neber do ſuch a thing, but with him unto whom I am bound by right, and by the Law, Sothly, quoth he, if you will not grant me with your good will, I will caſt you out into the midſt of the Sea, and there ſhall ye die an ebil death; if it be ſo quoth ſhe, that I muſt nèds conſent, or elſe die, firſt I pray thée to prepare a pribate place in the end of the ſhip, whereas I may fulfill thine intent ere I die; and alſo I pray thée, that I may ſay my prayers unto the Father of Heaben, that he may habe mercy on me.

The Maſter beliebed her, wherefore he did ordain her a Cabbin in the end of the ſhip. Wherein ſhe kneeled down on both her knées and made her prayers, ſaying on this wiſe: O thou my Lord God thou haſt kept me from my youth in cleanneſs, kèp me now that I be not deſloured, ſo that I may eber ſerb thee with a clean heart and mind, and let not this wicked man prebail with me, nor another the like wickedneſs come nigh me. When ſhe hab ended her prayers, there aroſe ſudden

uddenly a great tempest in the Sea, so that he Ship all brast, and all that were therein erished save the Lady, and she caught a able and saved her self, and the Master ught a board of the ship, and saved himself e wise: nevertheless she knew not of him r he of her, for they were driven to divers asts. The Lady landed in her own Empire ar to a rich City, wherein she was hourably received, and she lived so holy a life at God gave her grace and power to heal ch folk of all manner of diseases, wherefore ere came much people to her, both crook, blind and lame, and every man through e grace of God, and her good endeavour as healed, wherefore her name was known rough divers Regions. Nevertheless she as not known as the Empress. At the me time the Emperors brother (that had nged her before by the hair) was smitten th a foul Leprosie. The Knight that slew e Earls Daughter and put the bloody knife her hand, was blind, deaf, and had the e Palsie. The Thief that betrayed her to e Master of the ship was lame and full of e cramp. And the Master of the ship distraught of his wits.

When the Emperor heard that so holy a oman was in the City, he called his brother, and said to him thus: Go we, dear

brother, unto this holy woman that is dwelling in this City, that she may heal thee of thy Leprosie. Would to God, O noble brother (quoth he) that I were healed. Anon the Emperor with his brother went towards the City. Then when the Citizens heard of his coming, they received him honourably with procession and all prohibition fitting his estate. And then the Emperor enquired of the Citizens, if any such holy woman were among them that could heal sick folk of their diseases. The Citizens answered, and said that such an one there was. Now at the same time was come to the same City the Knight which slew the Earls Daughter, and the thief which she saved from the Gallows, and the Master of the ship, to be healed of their diseases.

Then was the Empress called forth before the Emperor, but she muffled her face as well as she could, that the Emperor her Husband should not know her, and when she had so done, she saluted him with great reverence, as appertained to his state, and again he in like manner, saying thus, O good Lady, if thou list of thy kindness to heal my brother of his Leprosie, ask of me what you will, and I shall grant it thee for thy reward.

When the Empress heard this, she look-

about her, and saw there the Emperors brot ther a foul Leper, she saw there also ỳ Knigh- that slew the Earls daughter blind and deaf, the Thief that she saved from the Gelows Lame, and also the Master of the Ship di- straught out of his wits, and all were come to her to be healed of their maladies, & knew her not, but though they knew her not, she knew them well. Then said she unto the Emperor thus: My reverend Lord, though you would give me all your Empire I cannot heal your brother, nor none of these other except they acknowledge openly what great evil they have done.

When the Emperor heard this, he turned him towards his brother, and said unto him: Brother, acknowledge openly thy sin be- fore all those men, that thou mayest be heal- ed of thy sickness. Then anon he began to tel how he had led his life, but he told not how he had hanged the Empress in the For- rest by the hair of the head most despight- fully,

When he had acknowledged all that him list, the Empress replied, and said: Sothly my Lord, I would gladly lay unto him my medicine, but I wot right well it is in vain, for he hath not made a full con- fession.

The Emperor hearing this, he turned

towards his brother, and said in this wise: what evil, sorrow or other unhappy wretchedness is in thee, seest thou not how that thou art a foul Leper? therefore acknowledge thy sin truly, that thou mayst be whole, or else avoid my company for evermore.

Ah my Lord quoth he, I may not tell my life openly, except I be sure of thy grace. What hast thou trespassed against me said the Emperor? Then answered his Brother and said: Mine offence against thee is grievous, and therefore I ask thee heartily forgiveness. The Emperor thought not on the Empress, for as much as he supposed she had been dead many years before, therefore he commanded his brother to tell forth wherein he had offended him, and he should be forgiven.

When the Emperor had thus forgiven his brother, he began to tell openly how he had desired the Empress to commit Adultery with him, and because she denied, he had hanged her by the hair in the Forrest on such a day.

When the Emperor heard this, he was almost beside himself, and in his rage he said thus: O thou wretched creature the vengeance of God is fallen upon thee, and were it not that I have pardoned thee, thou shouldest dye the most shameful death that could be thought.

Then

Then said the Knight that slew the Earls Daughter, I wot not quoth he, what Lady you mean, but I wot that my Lord found on a time such a Lady hanging in the Forrest, and brought her home to his Castle, and he took her and gave her his Daughter to keep, and I proboked her as much as I could to sin with me, but she would in no wise consent to me, wherefore I slew the Earls daughter that lay with her, and when I had so done, I put the bloody knife in the Ladies hand, that the Earl should think she had slain his Daughter with her own hand, and then was she exiled thence, but where she became I wot not.

Then said the Thief: I wot not of what Lady ye mean, but well I wot, that seven Officers were leading me to the Gallows, and such a Lady came riding by and bought me of them, and then went I with her, and afterwards I betrayed her unto the Master of the Ship.

Such a Lady quoth the Master of the ship received I, and when we were in the middest of the Sea, I would have lain with her, but she kneeled down to her prayers, and anon there arose such a tempest, that the Ship all to brast, and all therein was drowned save she and I, but afterward what befel of her I wot not.

Then

Then cryed the Empress with a loud voice and said, Soothly dear friends, ye do now truly confess and declare the truth, wherefore I will now apply my medicine, and anon they received their healths.

When the Lady the Empress had thus done, she uncovered her face to the Emperor, and beforthwith knew her, and ran to her and embraced her in his arms, and kissed her oftentimes, and for joy he wept bitterly, saying: Blessed be God, now I have found that I desired. And when he had thus said he led her home to the Palace with great joy, and after when it pleased Almighty God, they ended both their lives in peace and rest.

The Moral.

Dear friends, this Emperor betokeneth our Lord Jesus Christ. This Empress betokeneth a holy soul: this Emperors brother betokeneth the flesh, to whom our Lord hath given charge of the Empire, but most principally to the Soul; Nevertheless the wretched flesh oft proboketh the soul to sin, but the Soul that loveth God above all things withstandeth that temptation, calleth to her ghostly power, that is Reason, Will, Understanding, and Conscience, and maketh them

them to imprison the flesh, that is disobedient to the Soul, in the prison of true repentance, unto the time it obey reason in all things.

And thus in hope of mercy he sinneth again: to whom the holy Writer saith, Cursed be the man that sinneth in hope. And at the last the Soul inclineth to the flesh, and letteth him out of the prison of repentance, and washeth him from the filth of sin, and arayeth him with good vertues, and maketh him leap on the Palfray of charitable humility, and so rideth forth to meet our Lord with the sacrifice of thanksgiving. But alas, oft the sinner trespasseth against holy Scripture, wherefore the heart, that is, the lust of the flesh ariseth before him, and after runneth great bounds, that is, evil thoughts, and so long they chase, till the body and the soul be left alone, and then the flesh stirreth that pure soul, being the Spouse to Almighty God: but the pure and undefiled Soul that is so well beloved with God, will not forsake our Lord, and consent to sin: wherefore the wretched flesh full oft despoileth her of her cloathing, that is of her vertues, and hangeth her up by the hair on an Oak, that is on lusts, and delights, and there she hangeth till the good Earl cometh, that is a discreet Preacher in the Forrest of this world,

to preach and teach the Word of God: then he taketh her down, and leadeth her forth to the Church, to nourish his Daughter, that is nourish conscience with fruitful Faith. The Earl had in his Chamber a Lamp: right so every discreet Preacher should have before him the Lamp of holy Scripture, where by he may see both the griebance and profit of the Soul in learning vertues, and putting away of vice. The Steward that stirreth her to sin, is nought else but the pride of life, which is Steward of this world; by whom many men are deceived. But when the Soul that is so well beloved with Christ, will not consent unto the sin of pride, then taketh this evil Steward the knife of covetise, wherewith he slayeth the Earls Daughter, that is, Conscience, according to the Scripture, saying: Gold and silver hath blinded the eyes of Judges, and hath overthrown wise men, so that equity and righteousness might not enter, but stood a far, and turned their backs. This Lady also redeemed a man from dearh, that is from everlasting death which he hath deserved by deadly sin; Therefore do we as this Lady, smite we our horse that is our flesh, with the spurs of repentance, and so ride we forth in all hast to save our neighbour from the sink of deadly sin to help him both bodily and ghostly, as Solomon saith.

Woe

Woe to that man that lyeth in deadly sin, that hath no man to lift him out thereof. Therefore awake thy neighbour and help. For a brother that is holpen of another, is like a sure City, and if he give but a cup of cold water in the way of help, he shall not lose his reward.

But many now a dayes be very unkind as was the Thief which deceived the Lady, after that she had saved him from hanging.

The Master of the ship betokeneth the World, by whom many men be deceived. But nevertheless, as oft as a man taketh on him voluntarily the Commandements of God, and forsaketh the world, then breaketh he the ship. For it is impossible to please God and man, and the world, all at one time.

When this Lady had escaped the tempest of the Sea, She went to a City, that is, the Soul after the Troubles of this world, went to the holy life, and there she healed all manner of sick folk, that is every man that is troubled in his soul, that is infected with divers sicknesses, those that his Lady healed through holy life, But they could not be healed till they had first confessed their sins to the Empress, the Church of God, and then she healeth them by repentance and amendment

of life: yet all this while was the Empreſs unknown to her Husband, that is, the Church wandreth in ẏ wilderneſs of this wicked world, until God by miraculous means made her known unto him, and ſo led her home by victory and triumph in the truth, unto the heavenly habitation of eternal reſt and glory: Unto the which Almighty God bring us all for his Sons ſake. Amen.

The Argument.

Every ſupream Magiſtrate and other inferior, to be honoured and reverenced. Every true Chriſtian ought to conſider his duty herein, and every falſe Chriſtian perverting the wayes of the godly: reward of ſuch is laid up in Hell, but the juſt ſhall inherit the bleſſed life everlaſting.

The 39, Hiſtory.

IN Rome ſometime dwelt a mighty Emperor named Martin, which for entire affection kept with him his brothers ſon, whom men called Fulgentius. With this Martin dwelt alſo a Knight that was Steward of the Empire, and Uncle unto the Emperor, which enbied this Fulgentius, ſtudying day and night how he might bring the Emperor and this youth at debate. Wherefore the Steward on a day went to the Emperor and ſaid

said my Lord, quoth he, I that am your true servant am bound in duty to warn your Highness, if I hear any thing that toucheth your Honour, wherefore I have such things that I must néds utter it in secret to your Majesty between us two: then said the Emperor, good friend, say on what thée list.

My most dear Lord (quoth the Steward) Fulgentius your Cousin, and your nigh kinsman, hath defamed you wonderfully and shamefully throughout all your Empire, saying ẏ your breath stinketh, ꝯ that it is death to him to serve your Cup. Then the Emperor was grievously displeased, and almost beside himself for anger, and said unto him thus: I pray thée good friend tell me the very truth, if that my breath stinketh as he saith. My Lord (quoth the Steward) ye may beléeve me, I never perceived a sweéter breath in my dayes than yours is. Then said the Emperor, I pray thée good friend, tell me how I may bring this thing to good pro̅f.

The Steward answered and said: My Lord (quoth he) ye shall right well understand ẏ truth for to morrow next when he serveth you of your Cup, ye shall sée that he will turn away his face from you, because of your breath, and this is the most certain pro̅f that may

be

be had of this thing. Verily, quoth the Emperor, a truer proof cannot be had of this thing. Therefore anon when the Steward heard this, he went ſtraight to Fulgentius, and took him aſide, ſaying thus: Dear friend, thou art near kinſman, and alſo Nephew unto my Lord the Emperor therefore if thou wilt be thankful unto me, I will tell thee of a fault whereof my Lord the Emperor complaineth oft, and thinks to put thee from him (except it be the ſooner amended) and that will be a great reproof to thee. Then ſaid this Fulgentius, Ah good Sir, for his love that died upon the Croſs, tell me why my Lord is ſo ſore moved with me, for I am ready to amend my fault in all that I can or may, and for to be ruled by your diſcreet counſel.

Thy breath (quoth the Steward) ſtinketh ſo ſore that his drink doth him no good, ſo grievous unto him is the ſtinking breath of thy mouth. Then ſaid Fulgentius unto the Steward: Truly, that perceived I never till now, but what think ye of my breath, I pray you tell me the very truth? Truly (quoth the Steward) it ſtinketh greatly and foul: And this Fulgentius believed all that he had ſaid, and was right ſorrowful in his mind, & prayed the Steward of his counſel and help in this woful caſe. Then ſaid the Steward unto him

if that thou wilt do my counsel, I shall bring this matter to a good conclusion, wherefore do as I shall tell thee.

I counsel thee for the best, and also warn thee, that when thou serbest my Lord the Emperor of his Cup, that thou turn thy face away from him, so that he may not smel thy stinking breath, until the time that thou hast provided thee of some remedy therefore.

Then was Fulgentius right glad, & sware to him that he would do by his counsel.

Not long after it befel, that this young man Fulgentius serbed his Lord as he was wont to do, and therewith suddenly he turned his face from the Lord the Emperor, as the Steward had taught him.

And when the Emperor perceibed the aboiding his head, he smote this young Fulgentius on the breast with his foot, and said to him thus: O thou lewd Marlet, now I see well it is true that I habe heard of thee, and therefore go thou anon out of my sight, that I may see thee no more in this place. And with that this young Fulgentius wept full sore, and aboided the place, and went out of his sight.

And when this was done, the Emperor called unto him his Steward, and said: How may I rid this Marlet from the World, that thus hath defamed me? My most dear Lord,

quoth the Steward, right well you shall have your intent.

For here beside, within this three miles ye have brick makers, which daily make great fire: for to burn brick, and also they make Lime, therefore My Lord send to them this night, charge them upon pain of death, that whosoever cometh to them first in the morning, saying to them thus: My Lord commandeth them to fulfil his will: that they take him and cast him into the Furnace, and burn him: and this night command you this Fulgentius, that he go early in the morning to your workmen: and that he ask them, whether they have fulfilled your will which they were commanded, or not, and then shall they, according to your Commandment cast him into the fire, and thus shall he die an evil death.

Surely quoth the Emperor, thy counsel is good, therefore call to me that Varlet Fulgentius. And when the young man was come to the Emperors presence, he said to him thus: I charge thee upon pain of death, that thou rise early in the morning, and go to the burners of Lime and Brick, and that thou be with them early before the Sun rise, three miles from this house, and charg them in my behalf that they fulfil my commandement, or else they shall die a most shamefull death.

Then

Then spake this Fulgentius: My Lord if God send me my life I shall fulfil your will were it that I go to the worlds end.

When Fulgentius had this charge, he could not sleep for thought, that he must rise early to fulfil his Lords commandement. The Emperor about midnight sent a Messenger on horseback unto his Brick-makers, commanding that upon pain of death, that whosoever came to them first in the morning, saying unto them (as is before rehearsed,) they should take him and bind him, and cast him into the fire, and burn him to the bare bones.

The Brick-makers answered, and said it should be done. Then the messenger returned home again, and told the Emperor that his commandement should be diligently fulfilled.

Early in the morning following, Fulgentius arose and prepared him toward his way, and as he went he heard a Bell ring to Service, wherefore he went to hear service, and after the end of Service, he fell asleep, and there slept a long while, so soundly that the Priest nor none other might awake him.

The Steward desiring inwardly to hear of his death, about two of the clock he went unto the workmen, and said unto them thus: Sirs (quoth he) have ye done the Emperors commandement or no?

The Brick-makers answered him and said: No truly, we have not yet done his commandement, but it shall be done, & with that they laid hands on him. Then cryed the Steward and said: Good Sirs save my life, for the Emperor commanded that Fulgentius should be put to death. Then said they, the Messenger told us not so, but he bad us that whosoever came first in the morning, saying, as you have said, that we should take him, and cast him into the Furnace, and burn him to ashes: and with that they threw him into the fire.

And whenhe was burnt, Fulgentius came to them, and said: Good Sirs, have you done my Lords Commandement, yea, sothly said they, and therefore go ye again to the Emperor, and tell him so. Then said Fulgentius, For Christs love tell me that Commandement.

We had in commandment said they, upon pain of death, that whosoever came to us first in the morning and said like as thou hast said, that we should take him and cast him into the Furnace: But before thee came the Steward, and therefore have we fulfilled on him the Emperors commandement, now he is burnt to the bare bones.

When Fulgentius heard this, he thanked God that he had so preserved him from death

therefore

therefore he took his leave of the workmen, and went again to the Palace.

When the Emperor saw him, he was almost distract of his wits for anger, and thus he said, hast thou been with the Brick-makers and fulfilled my commandement? Sothly my gracious Lord I have been there, but ere I came there, your commandement was fulfilled, How may that be true quoth the Emperor?

Forsooth said Fulgentius, the Steward came to them afore me, and said that I should have said, so they took him and threw him into the Furnace, and if I had come any rather, so would they have done to me, and therefore I thank God that he hath preserved me from death.

Then said the Emperor, tell me the truth of such questions as I shall demand of thee. Then said Fulgentius to the Emperor: you never found me in any falshood, and therefore I greatly wonder why ye have ordained such a death for me? for well ye know, that I am your own brothers Son. Then said the Emperor to Fulgentius: It is no wonder, for ỳ death I ordained for thee through counsel of the Steward, because thou didst defame me throughout all my Empire, saying, that my breath did stink so grievously, that it was death to thee, and in token thereof, thou

turn'ſt away thy face when thou ſerv'dſt me of my Cup, and that I ſaw with mine eyes; and for this cauſe I ordained for thée ſuch a death, and yet thou ſhalt die, except I hear a better excuſe.

Then anſwered Fulgentius, and ſaid: Ah dear Lord, if it might pleaſe your Highneſs for to hear me, I ſhall ſhew you a ſubtil and deceitful imagination. Say on quoth the Emperor.

The Steward (quoth Fulgentius) that is now dead came to me and ſaid, that ye told unto him that my breath did ſtinck; & thereupon he counſelled me, that when I ſerved you of your Cup, I ſhould turn away my face I take God to witneſs I lie not.

When the Emperor heard this he believed him, and ſaid, O my Nephew, now I ſée, through the right wiſe judgment of God, the Steward is burnt, and his own wickedneſs and envie is fallen on himſelf, for he ordained this malice againſt thée, and therefore thou art much bound to Almighty God that hath preſerved thée from death.

The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperor betokeneth every ſupream Magiſtrate, & Fulgentius his Nephew betokeneth every true Chriſtian man which

which should truly serve them with faithful loyalty, like as Fulgentius served the Emperor at his cup wherefore he shall be greatly loved of God. This Steward betokeneth every false Christian man, as Cain, which oftentimes turned the heart of right wise men from God, saying that his breath stinketh that is, that the life of this Magistrate is not acceptable to God or man, which is against the Scripture, which saith, Judge not and ye shall not be Judged. But oftentimes such malicious people accuse righteous men, wherefore they shall be cast into the everlasting fire of hell, where is wailing and weeping, and misery without end. But the righteous shall ascend to everlasting life. Unto the which bring us our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Argument.

Tyrants and ungodly persons walk without knowledge of the truth, till they come to the Church of God, the wicked persecute the godly, but as they are preserved by the mighty providence of God, so they ought not to sleep in sin. A figurative speech of three several meanings, viz. *Take* Yeild, and Flee: the signification therefore.

The 42. History.

THere dwe't sometime in Rome a mighty Emperor named Delphinus, which had

no children save only a daughter, which was a fair creature, and well beloved of her Father.

As this Emperor rode on a day on hunting in the Forrest, suddenly he rode out of his way, and lost his men, wherefore he was greatly discomforted, for he wist not whether he rode, nor in what place he was: till at the last when he had thus ridden all the day alone, in the ebening he saw a house, and thither he rode a great pace, and knocked at the gate: immediately the good man of the house heard him, and asked the cause of his knocking, and what he would have: Dear friend quoth the Emperor, lee it is night, as ye may see; therefore I desire of you a lodging for the love of God.

When he had thus said, the good man of the house, unawares that he was the Emperor, answered & said: Good friend) quoth he) I am the Emperors Foster, and have plenty of Venison, and other victual for you; When the Emperor heard this, he was right glad in his mind, nevertheless he told him not that he was the Emperor. Then the Foster opend the gate, and received him as he could, and set him to supper, and served him worthily. And when he had supped the Foster brought him to his Chamber, and when time was he went to bed.

In

In the same night it befel, that the Fosters wife did travel of a child in another chamber hard by, and was delibered the same night of a goodly Son. And as the Emperor lay in his bed sleeping, him seemed he heard a voice saying to him thrice these words, Take, take, take. And with that he awake, and marvelled greatly what it might be, saying to himself thus: A voice biddeth me Take, take, take, What shall I take: And immediately he fell a sleep again.

And second time he heard a voice saying unto him these words, Yeild, yeild, yeild. And with that he awakned again, and wondred greatly, saying unto himself: What may this signifie: First I heard a voice that said, Take, take, take, and nothing I received: and right now I heard another voice that said, Yeild, yeild, yeild. What should I yeild.

And as he lay thus thinking with himself, he fell a sleep again. And then he heard the third voice, saying these words thrice: Flee, flee, flee, For this night is a child born, that after thy decease shall be Emperor. When the Emperor heard this, he awakened and wondred greatly what it might be.

In the morning following, the Emperor called to him the Foster, & said: Dear friend, I pray thee tell me, if any child be born here about

about this night to thy knowledge. My wife quoth the Foster, this night is delivered of a Son. I pray thee fair Emperor, shew me thy Son. When the Emperor had seen the Child, he saw a mark in the childs Visage, whereby he might know him another time, and he said to the Foster thus:

Dear friend, knowest thou who I am? nay truly, quoth the Foster, for I never saw you before this time as far as I can remember, nevertheless it seemeth that ye be a Gentleman. Then answered the Emperor and said, I am the Emperor your Lord, whom you have lodged this night: wherefore I give thee hearty thanks. This hearing the Foster, he fell down upon both his knees at his feet, and besought him of mercy, if that he had offended his Highness in any thing. Then answered the Emperor, and said: Be thou nothing afraid, for I thank thee heartily for thy good chear, and thy Son that was born to night, I will have to bring up in my Court, and shortly I will send for him.

O my gracious Lord quoth the Foster, it is not that such a noble Emperor should nourish the child of his Subject and Servant: nevertheless your will be fulfilled, and when your messengers come, I shall deliver them my Son.

Then the Emperor took his leave, and rode home

home to his Palace, And shortly after he was come home, he called unto him such servants as he trusted best, and said to them thus: Go ye unto my Foster, with whom I was lodged such a night in the Forrest, and receive of him his Son, of which his Wife was delibered that night, and upon pain of death I command you that you slay him by the way, and cast his flesh to the Dogs, but bring with you the heart to me: and except ye fulfil my commandement, ye shall die the cruellest death that can be thought. Anon his Servants went to the Forrest, and received the Fosters Son, and brought him with them, and when they were come near unto the Pallace, one of them said how shall we do that we may fulfill our Lords commandement in slaying of this child? Some answered and said, that the child should be slain, and some would have his life saved, & while they were thus striving among themselves, one of them, that was most merciful said unto the rest: O my good loving friends, hear my counsel, I beseech you, and ye shall not repent you thereof. If we murther this innocent child, we shall greatly offend Almighty God: And behold hereby are young Pigs, kill we one of them, and then we may take with us his heart, and present it unto the Emperor, saying, ℔ it is the heart of ℔ young Child. Then said they, thy counsel is good, but

but what shall we do with the Child: God friend (quoth he) let us wrap him in some clothes, and lay him in some hollow tree, for peradventure God will help him, and save his life.

When he had thus said, they did after his counsel in all things, and killed a Pig, and went their way, and carried home with them the Pigs heart to the Emperor, saying unto him thus: Loe, gracious Lord, we have destroyed the Child, as ye commanded us, and with that they shewed him the Pigs heart. The Emperor supposing it had been the Childs heart, took it, and cast it into the fire despightfully, saying? Loe, there is the heart of him which should have been Emperor after me; Lo, what it is to believe in dreams, which be but fantasies & vain things.

The same day after the Child was put into the hollow tree, there came an Earl to hunt in the Forrest, and as his Hounds chased an Hart, they came to the Hollow tree where the Child lay, and when they smelt the savour of the Child, they would go no further. The Earl seeing this, marvelled why his Hounds abode there, and smote his Horse with his spurs, he rode a great pace till he came in to them. And when he came unto the tree wherein the Child was laid, he looked in at a hole, and saw there the Child lying, and

then

then he was right glad, and took the Child up in his arms full lovingly, and bear it home to his Castle, saying unto the Countess his wife: Lo my dear wife, this day by fortune I have found a very fair Child in a hollow tree as I hunted in the Forrest, whereof I am right glad: And because thou never yet conceivedst the Child, therefore I exhort thee that thou wilt feign thy self to trabail with Child, and say that thou hast born this Child, the Countess fulfilled gladly the Earls desire, and said, my most dear Lord, your will in this thing shall be done.

Not long after this news went throughout all the Countrey, that the Countess was delivered of a fair Son, wherefore every man rejoyced much

The Child began to grow, and was well beloved of every man, and especially of the Earl and the Countess. It befel when the Child was fifteen years of age, the Emperor made a solemn feast unto all the Lords of his Empire, unto the which feast this Earl was called, who at the day assigned came, and brought his Son with him, which was at that time a fair young Squire, and he carved at the board before the Earl. The Emperor stedfastly beheld him, and espied the token in his forehead, which he had seen in the Fosters house, wherewith he was greatly moved

within

within himself, and said unto the Earl in this manner. Whose Son is this? Certes, said the Earl, he is my Son. Then said the Emperor, By the Faith that thou owest to me tell me the truth.

The Earl seeing that he might not excuse himself, but that needs he must tell him the truth, told how he found him in a hollow Tree. This hearing the Emperor, he was distract of his wits for anger, and called to him his servants, which he had sent before to destroy the Child. And when they came before him, he made them to swear that they should tell him the truth what they had done with the Child.

Gracious Lord said they, we yeild us unto your Grace and goodness, for pitty so moved us, that we might not destroy him but we put him in a hollow Tree: what befel of him afterward, certainly we know not, and in his stead we killed a Pig, and brought the heart thereof unto you.

When the Emperor heard the truth of the matter he said unto the Earl: This young man quoth he) shall abide with me: The Earl immediately granted, though it was greatly against his will.

When the Feast was ended, every man took his leave of the Emperor, and went whereas they list. And at that time it fortuned,

ned, that the Empress and her Daughter sojourned in another Countrey far from thence by the Commandment of the Emperor.

Not long after the Emperor said unto this young Squire, it behoveth thee to ride unto the Empress my Wife with my Letters. I am ready at your Commandement my Lord, said he, to fulfill your desire. Immediately the Emperor wrote Letters, the intent whereof was this, that the Empress should take the bearer of these Letters, and let him be drawn at the Horse tail, and after that she should let him be hanged till he be dead, & that on pain of death. When ỳ Letters were all sealed, the Emperor gave them unto the young Squire, commanding him to spéed him on his journey. And straight way the young Squire put them close into a box, and rode forth on his journey. When he had ridden three or four days on his journey, in an evening he came unto a Castle where dwelt a Knight, and gently desired of him a nights lodging.

The Knight beholding the sweet favour of the young Squire, made him good chéer, and afterward brought him into his Chamber, and when he was there, he went to bed, and immedietely fel asléep, for he was full weary of his journey, and forgot his box with the Letters lying openly in his Chamber.

When the Knight saw the box, he opened

it

it, and found the Letters sealed with ỹ Emperors sign Manual, & was greatly tempted to open them, and at the last he opened them neatly and then read how the Empress upon pain of death should put the bearer of them to death, and then he was right sorrowful, and said within himself: Alas (quoth he) it is great pitty to slay so fair and proper a man, and immediately after the Knight raced out that writing, & wrote in the same place these words following: upon pain of death I command thee, that thou take this young Squire bearer of these Letters, and let him be wedded without any delay, unto my Daughter and yours, with all Honour and Solemnity that can be thought, and when they be married, that ye make as much account of him as if he were your own Son, and that he supply my room till I come unto you my self.

When the Knight had thus written, he closed the Letters neatly, and put them into the box again. Early in the morning the young Squire arose, and hastily made ready and took his leave of the Knight, and rode forth on his journey, and the third day after he came unto the Empress, and saluted her dutifully in the Emperors behalf, and gave her the Letters. When the Empress had read them, anon she sent forth her Messengers through the Country, commanding

manding the States and Gentlemen to come unto her Daughters wedding on a day assigned.

When the day was come, thither came many great Lords and Ladies, and anon the young Squire espoused the Emperors daughter with great honour, according to the tenor of the Letters, and was much honoured among the people.

Not long after it befel, that the Emperor came into the country, & when the Empress heard of his coming, she took with her her Son in Law with much other people, and went to welcome the Emperor. When the Emperor saw this young Squire leading the Lady his wife, he was greatly moved within himself, and said, O thou cursed woman, because thou hast not fulfilled my commandement thou shalt dye an evil Death.

O my dear Lord (quoth she) all that you commanded me to do I have fulfilled. Nay cursed woman said the Emperor, it is not so, for I wrote to thee that thou should put him to death, and yet he is alive. My Lord, quoth the Empress, you wrote to me that I should give him your Daughter to Wife, and that on pain of death, in witness whereof, loe here your Letters sealed with your own Seal Manuel.

When the Emperor saw this he wondred

greatly and said, Is he then espoused to my daughter? Yea surely said the Empress, long ago with great solemnity, and as I perceive your daughter is with child. Then said the Emperor: O Lord Jesus, it is great folly to strive against thine ordinance, therefore sith it is so, thy will must needs be fulfilled. And with that he took his Son in Law in his arms and kissed him, which after his Death was Emperor, and ended his life in rest and peace.

The Moral.

This Emperor may betoken Herod, who would have slain the Child Jesus, wherefore he sent Messengers to seek him, according to the Scripture, shewing how he commanded three Kings to seek him, & bring him tidings again where he was, that he might come and worship him also. The Foster betokeneth Joseph our Ladies Husband, which kept him: but when the three Kings came they slew him not, but worshipped him on their knees, and left him in the hollow tree of his God-head. The Earl that found this Child, betokeneth the Holy Ghost which warned Joseph by the Angel in his sleep, that he should take our Lady and her Son and flee into Egypt.

By the first take may be understood the great benefit that he gave thee, when he gave

thee

thée a soul made to his own similitude. By the second take is understood, ỹ Son of God, which was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary. By the third take is understood the same Son of God which died upon the Crosse.

By the first yeild is understood, that we ought to yeild our soul unto Almighty God, as clean as he gave us it after our regeneration in Baptism. By the second yeild, that we ought to yeild honour, worship and love unto Almighty God, and man. By thy third yeild, that we ought to yeild to God true confession of faith, contrition of heart, and amendment of life.

The first flee betokeneth sin, which we should flée: the second flee betokeneth ỹ world, which we should flée, for the great temptations that are therein. The third flee betokeneth everlasting pain, ỹ which we ought to flée through faith, by the which we may come to everlasting bliss: unto the which bring us our Lord Jesus, Amen.

The Argument.

The soul of man being ravished by the Tyranny of sin, she complaineth unto Christ, which heareth her. The Tyrant is overcome by Christ, who espouseth her unto him, preparing a place of perpetual joy for her. Christ receiveth patient sinners to his mercy by his death and passion.

The 43. Hiſtory.

THere dwelt ſometime in Rome a mighty Emperor, named Sontaſius, which ordained a Law, that whoſoeber Rabiſhed a Virgin ſhould die, and if ſhe were reſcued, then he that reſcued her ſhould habe her to wife, if him liſt: and if he would not marry her, then ſhe ſhould be eſpouſed by his appointment. It befel on a day, that a Tyrant named Poncianus, led a Virgin into a forreſt and deſloured her of her Maiden-head. And when he had ſo done, he would habe ſlain her, and as he was deſpoiling her of her Cloaths, there came riding by the Forreſt a gentle Knight, which heard the lamenting of the Damſel, wherefore he rode a great pace into the forreſt to ſeek what it might be. Now when he came, he ſaw a woman ſtanding all naked, ſabe onely her ſmock, to whom the Knight ſpake: Art thou ſhe (ſaid he) that cry'd ſo lamentably: Then anſwered the Damoſel: Yea certainly, for this man that ſtandeth here hath rabiſhed and deflowered me of my maiden-head, and now he would ſlay me, & therefore he hath deſpoiled me of my cloaths: for the lobe of God gentle Knight help me now. Then ſaid the Tyrant, ſhe lieth, for ſhe is my wife, and I habe found her in Adultery with another

another man, therefore I will slay her. Then said the Knight, I beleive better the woman then thee, for see the tokens appear openly in her visage, that thou hast ravished her, therefore will I fight with thee for her deliverance. And immediately they buckled both together and fought eagerly till they were both sore wounded. Nevertheless the Knight obtained the Victory, and put the Tyrant to flight.

Then said the Knight unto the woman: Lo, I have suffered for thy love many sore wounds, and have saved thee from Death, wilt thou therefore promise to be my Wife; thereto I assent, quoth she, with all my heart, and thereupon I plight thee my troth. When they were thus ensured, then said the Knight as followeth.

Here beside is my Castle, go thither, and abide there till I have provided all things needful for our weding, for I purpose to make a great feast thereat. My Lord, quoth she I am ready to fulfil your will: Then went she unto the Castle, whereas she was worthily received: and the Knight went unto his friends for to bid them to the Marriage. In the mean while came Poncianus the Tyrant to the Knights Castle, and prayed her that he might speak with her. Then came she down from the Castle to him, and this Tyrant subtilly

flattered her, and said: Gentle love, if it please you to consent to me, I shall give you both silver and gold and great riches, and I shall be your servant, & ye my Soveraign. When the Woman heard this, full lightly she was deceived through his flattering language, and soon granted him to be his Wife, and took him to her in the Castle.

Not long after the Knight came home and found the Castle gate shut, and knocked there at, but long it was ere he might have answer. At the last the woman came and demanded why he knocked at the gate. Then said he to her: O sweet Lady why hast thou so soon changed thy love: let me come in. Nay surely, said she, thou shalt not come in here, for I have here with me my old love which I loved before, remember quoth the Knight, thou gavest me thy troth to be my wife, and how I save thee from Death, and if thou ponder not thy faith, behold my wounds which I have suffered in my body for thy love. And so he uncloth-ed himself naked all save his hosen, that he might shew his wounds openly. But she would not see them, nor speak more with him but shut fast the gate and went her way. Now when the Knight saw this, he went to the Judge and made his complaint to him, pray-ing him to give him right judgement on the Tyrant and the Woman.

The

Then the Judge called them both before him, and when they were come, the Knight said thus: my Lord, I ask the benefit of the Law which is this: If a man rescue a woman from ravishing, the rescuer shall marry her if him list, and this woman I delibered from the hands of the Tyrant, therefore I ought to have her to my wife: and furthermore she have her faith and troth to marry with me and thereupon we went to my castle, and I have been at great cost against our wedding, and therefore as it semeth to me, she is my Wife by the law.

Then said the Judge to the Tyrant, thou knowest well that this Knight delibered her from thy hand, and for her love hath suffered greivous wounds, and therefore well thou wottest that she is his wife by the Law, if that him list. But after her deliverance with flattering speech thou hast deceived her, therefore I judge thee to be hanged.

Then said the Judge to the Woman, likewise: O Woman, thou knowest how this knight saved thee from Death, and thereupon thou betrothedst him thy faith & troth to be his Wife, first by the Law, and after by faith and troth: this notwithstanding, thou consentest afterward to the Tyrant & broughtest him into the Knights Castle, and didst shut the gate against the Knight, and wouldst not

ſée his wounds which he ſuffered for thy loue, and therefore I iudge thée to be hanged alſo. And ſo it was done, both the Rauiſher and the that was rauiſhed, were condemned to death, wherefore euery man praiſed the Iudge for his wiſe iudgement.

The Moral.

This Emperor betokeneth the Father of heauen which ordained a Law, that if the ſoul of man were rauiſhed from God, by ſin, the ſauiour of the ſoul ſhould eſpouſe her if him liſt. The woman that was rauiſhed betokeneth the ſoul of man, which was rauiſhed by the ſin of our forefather Adam, and lad out of Paradiſe into the Forreſt of this wretched world by the Tyrant Poncianus, which betokenneth the Deuil, and he not onely defiled her, loſing the heritage of Heauen, but alſo he would ſlay her with euerlaſting pain. But the Soul cryeth with an high voice, whoſe cry our Lord Ieſus Chriſt heard. This cry was made when Adam cryed after the oyl of mercy: and the Patriarks and Prophets cryed for remedy, ſaying theſe words: O thou higheſt in the Eaſt viſit thou us, &c.

The Knight betokenneth our Lord Ieſus Chriſt which came from Heauen, and fought with the Tyrant, that is the Deuil, and both they

they were sore wounded: for our Lord Jesus Christ was wounded in the flesh, and the Devil maimed in his Kingdom: Wherefore the woman that is the soul, gave her faith and troth unto Christ Jesus, when she became a Christian, saying these words; I forsake the Devil and all his Pride, and beleive in God the Father Almighty. Then ordained our Lord Jesus Christ a Marriage between him and her with the two special Sacraments of Baptism, & the Lords Supper, whereof may be made a strong Castle against the Devil. Also our Lord commanded the soul to keep her still in the Castle of Vertue, till he went to provide that was needful: that is, our Lord Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven to prepare for her a dwelling place of everlasting joy, whereas she should dwell after ỳ day of judgement with our Lord God in honour and glory.

But alas, in the mean time came the Devil, and beguiled the wretched soul by deadly sin, and so entred into the Castle of our heart, which should be the Castle of God. The Knight Jesus knocked at ỳ gate of our heart according to the Scripture, Lo *I* stand at the door and knock, if any man will open that *I* may enter. But where the Devil is, God doth never enter; except the sinner will receive him by repentance, which seeing our Lord hanging upon the Cross, that we may

see

ſee his bloody wounds which he ſuffered for us we ſinners ſhould be the rather mindful of his love: For from the crown of his head to the ſole of his feet was left no whole place; therefore ſaith the Prophet Eſay, Behold and ſee if any ſorrow be like to my ſorrow. Therefore he is a wretched man that will not be converted unto his Lord God, but lye ſtill in deadly ſin, wherefore when he is called before the high judge, he ſhall be condemned to everlaſting Death. Therefore ſtudy we to open the Doors of our hearts by fruitful faith in Almighty God, and then without doubt we ſhall obtain everlaſting life. Unto which bring us our Lord Jeſus, Amen.

The Argument.

The Body and Soul of man being made by Gods grace the Temple of the holy Ghoſt, do give themſelves to ſerve and pleaſe God in this life, and to love God and their Neighbours according to his laws; and though the body by death ſuffer mortal affliction for a time, yet by faith, hope and charity in Jeſus Chriſt, both body and ſoul ſhall inherit life and joy everlaſting.

The 44. Hiſtory.

IT is read of a certain Roman Emperor, which erecting for himſelf a goodly Monument

ment or Tomb, as the Labourers Digged in the ground of his palace, they found a Coffin of gold bound about with three hoops, and upon the Hoops was engraven these words, I have spent, I have given, I have kept: I have had, I now have lost, I am punished. That which I had I spent, that which I gave I have. When the Emperor saw this, he called together his Nobles and States, and said unto them: My Lords, go and consider among your selves what this inscription meaneth, unto whom the nobles shortly after returned this short answer, saying, the meaning of this inscription is no other but this: There was a certain Emperor your Predecessor, which desired to leave behind him an example to others, that they might follow him in good life and conversation, viz. I have spent my life in judging others righteously, & governing my self according to ꝑ rule of reason; I have given to my souldiers things necessary, unto yor maintenance and living, and to every one as to my self, according to their deserts. I have kept in all my works, righteousness, mercy to them that need it, and to workmen their worthy wages; I have had, a liberal and a constant heart to every one that serveth me: I have given riches in their necessity, & loving favour at all times. I have had a hand to tame and subdue enemies, to protect and

defend

defend friends, to punish offenders. I have lost, foolishness, the friendship of enemies, and lust or lacibiousness, of the flesh. I am punished, now by Death, because I beleived not as I ought to have done, in one God eternal. I am punished, I say, alass, because I cannot redeem my self, but by the merits of Christ Jesus the Saviour of the World. When the Emperor aforesaid heard the meaning of the inscriptions wisely interpreted on this manner, and how long that deceased Emperor had lived, he thereby governed himself and his Subjects more providentially, and ended his life in Gods peace, with much honour.

The Moral.

Dear friends, this Emperor may be called every good Christian man or woman, which ought, and is bound to erect and re-edifie a Tomb, that is, his heart prepared unto God, that he may perform his will above all things: and so diggeth in the ground of his heart by contrition and sorrowful repentance for his sins, that he doth find a golden Coffin, that is a body dead to sin, but his soul garnished with vertues by Gods grace granted to the same, and bound about with three golden hoops, viz, with Faith, Hope, and Charity. What then was engraven in the same three Hoops? First, I have spes: where it may be asked what

what hast thou spent? the good Christian answereth, body, and soul in the service of God: if any of you bestow this temporal life in, he shall be assured of great reward, even of life everlasting. The second inscription is, I have kept. What hast thou kept? the good Christian answereth, a contrite and humble heart, and prepared unto God, to do whatsoever his good pleasure was. The third inscription is, I have given. What hast thou given? The good Christian answereth: Love unto God with all my heart, with all my soul, and with all my mind: and love unto my Neighbour, according to the commandement of God. The fourth inscription is, I have had. What hast thou had? The good christian answereth and saith, surely a wretched life, because I was conceived in sin, and born in inquity, and also was formed of vile and base matter. Fifthly, what is the inscription, I now have? The good christian answereth by Baptism, and thereby am made the souldier of Christ, by vertues which God gave me in my Baptism: whereas before I was the bond-slave of Satan. Sixthly, what is that inscription, I have lost? To this answered the good christian, surely the favour of God, by mine own deserts: yet all the sins which I have committed against God, I have by repentance corrected & amended: because

repen-

repentance is one mean, but Chriſts merits chiefly & eſpecially cleanſeth us from all ſin. Seventhly, what is that inſcription, I am puniſhed? The good Chriſtian anſwereth and ſaith, Becauſe I am afflicted by Death for the offences and ſins of my life. Eightly, what is that inſcription, I have ſpent which I had? To this anſwereth the good Chriſtian ſaying, I have beſtowed all my life time here in works of mercy, by the grace which I receiued of my Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Ninthly, what is that inſcription, That which I gave I have, ſurely in all my temporal life I gave all my counſel, whole aſſent and will which I had to be the ſervant of God, and now it is in the good will and pleaſure of God, that I ſhall remain with him in joys of everlaſting life in Heaven: unto the which bring us all. Amen.

FINIS.